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QUEEN HORTENSE OF HOLLAND AND HER SON

By Gérard (Versailles)

NAPOLEON THE THIRD

A Biography

BY

EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE

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PREFACE

Throughout the middle decades of the last century, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte held the centre of the world's stage. To many of his contemporaries he appeared the arch-enemy of Europe, as one who might at any moment let loose his legions to bring all the nations beneath his sway. Others, contrariwise, beheld in him the keystone of the political fabric, the wise moderator of the nations, the bulwark of society against red revolution. The Empress Charlotte identified him with Satan; an English divine, the Rev. Mr. Baxter, assigned him a rôle at least as terrific and cataclysmic. To persons of less exalted imagination, the Emperor of the French was the embodiment of imperial power and splendour, rivalling the ancient Cæsars in guilt and glitter. To the revolutionaries he was a renegade, a stumbling-block, a lion in the path —more simply, a bitter disappointment. To the bulk of his subjects, the peasant farmers of France, he was *le vieux* come again to make France respected by the foreigner and to guarantee them peace and prosperity in their fields. Everybody allowed that his career was of the most romantic. By a stretch of language he might have been said to have spent half his time in prison and half on the throne. He was the adventurer triumphant beyond the wildest dreams of adventurers, the parvenu arrived at heights of glory rarely to be attained by the legitimate heirs of age-long dynasties.

An enigma was what he remained to many of the acutest and most penetrating intellects of his own time. The questions were not merely asked, What is he plotting? What is he up to? but it was assumed that there was a secret about him—that he was a flesh-and-blood Sphynx. This illusion lingers to-day. The present work is an attempt to read that riddle—if riddle there was—to get at the real nature of the man, to trace its origins in his ancestry, to estimate the influence of persons and events upon his character, and to analyse his motives. The author does not pretend to the omniscience of the novelist, still less to any powers of divination. He has been content to pursue the old-fashioned methods of studying the man in his acts and recorded utterances. But the book is put forward as a life of Napoleon III, not as a history of his reign.

The taste of the time demands that history shall interest rather than instruct. Though a biographer is permitted to adorn his tale by a judicious use of his imagination, he points a moral at his peril. But the present writer takes that risk in observing that his hero was one of the most notable champions of that one-man system of government which is just now very much in the vogue. Napoleon believed in government for the people, but not by the people; he had as little use for parliaments as our modern dictators. He overcame that prejudice towards the end of his reign, and there are not wanting those who ascribe his ruin to that change of front. But the true moral (it has slipped out of its bag!) is that dictators will be tolerated only so long as they are successful at home and abroad. The peoples take a singularly unsentimental view of these capable men. Judged by his disposition, no ruler ever deserved better of mankind than the man who yielded up his sword at

Sedan. He desired not merely the general prosperity which every politician vaguely desires nor the aggrandisement of his country, which the English and Germans supposed to be his chief preoccupation—he wanted everybody to be happy; he hated to cause pain; his last act was to constitute himself a prisoner, in order that no more blood might be shed. Why he did not achieve more may perhaps be made clearer by the following pages.

There is an enormous bibliography of Napoleon III. Everybody who met him had something to write about him, even if, as was often the case, that something was not true. To the fairly complete lists of authorities attached to recent biographies should be added an important work, *La Guerre de* 1870: *Causes et Responsabilités*, by Henri Welschinger, who assisted in an official capacity at the last parliamentary debates under the imperial regime; the diary of Valérie Masuyer, companion to Queen Hortense, and Paléologue's conversations with the Empress Eugénie, both originally published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; finally, *The Paris Embassy*: *selections from the papers of Earl Cowley*, published only last year (1928). Works (and they are numerous) dealing with the alleged scandals of the court and private life of the Emperor have not been much used, nor does the author place much faith in them.

The Duke of Wellington, when asked to say what he thought about Napoleon I, is recorded to have declared, after a minute's reflection, that the great Emperor was no gentleman. It is perhaps rather damning a great man by faint praise to add that a gentleman (and in more than the Duke's limited sense of the word) Napoleon III always was.

EDMUND B. D'AUVERGNE.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
Book I	THE PRETENDER	15
Book II.	THE AUTOCRAT	125
Book III.	THE LIBERAL EMPEROR ..	199

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Queen Hortense of Holland and Her Son	*Frontispiece*
	To face page
Fialin de Persigny	40
The Duc de Morny	96
The Empress Eugénie	124
Prince Napoleon	146
Countess Castiglione	170
The Emperor and Empress in 1865	198
The Emperor Napoleon III	222

NAPOLEON THE THIRD

BOOK I

THE PRETENDER

I

A FRENCH noble, who at the outbreak of the Revolution had gleefully renounced his title and privileges, thrown himself heart and soul into the Revolutionary movement, and led Revolutionary armies to victory, wrote while confined in the Conciergerie, in the year 1794, to his wife: "Judging from the species of interrogatory to which, with a great number of prisoners, I have been subjected to-day, I perceive that I am the victim of the vile calumnies of certain aristocratic fellow prisoners who call themselves patriots. The presumption that their infernal machinations will follow me up to the Revolutionary tribunal leaves me no hope of ever seeing you again or of embracing my dear children. Useless to speak of my sorrow my tender affection for them, the fraternal affection that unites me to you, can leave you no doubt as to the feelings with which I take leave of life. Equally do I regret my separation from a country which I love, for which I would willingly have given my life a thousand times over, and which not only can I serve no longer, but which expels me from her bosom as a bad citizen. This harrowing reflection does not forbid me to commend my memory to you. Strive to rehabilitate it, by showing that my entire life consecrated

to the service of my country and to the triumph of liberty and equality, should in the view of the people refute the odious calumnies of the suspects. But suspend your efforts, for in the midst of the Revolutionary storm a great people struggling to be free must rightly be suspicious and must fear rather to overlook the guilty than to condemn the innocent. I shall die with the courage that befits a free man, whose most ardent wish is for the prosperity of the Republic."

This man, who died finding excuses for his slayers and more anxious for the triumph of the Revolution than for his own vindication, was Alexandre de Beauharnais, husband of Josephine, afterwards Empress of the French. He was the grandfather of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, better known as Napoleon III.

Every man is born into the world with a temperament which he has got to reconcile as best he can with his environment. Most of us have to conform to creeds and laws and institutions which may fit us as ill as would the togas or suits of mail of those who framed them. Harder still is the lot of him who is called upon to uphold a tradition in conflict with his nature. Herein lies the tragedy of the third Napoleon. He, a Beauharnais, had to play the Bonaparte.

His father in the flesh was undoubtedly his mother's husband, Louis, King of Holland, the great Napoleon's brother. His profile and the upper part of his head attested his legitimacy, and refuted the clumsy scandal which assigned a lover to his mother while she was mourning her first-born son in a Pyrenean valley—that lover, too, a heavy impossible Dutchman whom the gossips maladroitly confounded with a more sprightly brother, then five hundred miles away. Otherwise, he took after his mother, Hortense Beauharnais, in face and manner—at least in his youth. And through her, but not from her, he inherited the spirit of the martyred Republican noble.

That, perhaps, he never admitted. For he was vowed

to Napoleon from his birth. It was Napoleon who took possession of him, holding him over the christening font and roundly rebuking Hortense for daring to take his nephews who belonged to him, out of the country. It must have been long before the child grasped the real significance for him of the gentleman at Florence he was taught to call Father, and to whom he was sent on visits from time to time. But Napoleon dawned on his childish consciousness as God dawns on most children's. This tremendous and benign being, he gathered, was now held captive by wicked men on a rock in the middle of the ocean. Not long ago, as grown people reckon, he had reigned in majesty over the kings and nations. Every part of Europe, including the German land where the boy now dwelt, had echoed to the tramp of his armies. That he would come again, trailing clouds of glory, to make his enemies his footstool, there were still many to whisper, even before the battle smoke of Waterloo had fairly cleared away. In his glory the child had been cradled; in his shadow he now lived. He and his elder brother, Napoleon Louis, who lived with their father, were the god's nephews, and bore his name. It was because of their affinity with him that Louis and his mother were living in Bavaria and Switzerland, instead of in the France which was their native country, and, as there were perhaps nurses to hint, his inheritance.

Louis was seven years old when the Bonapartes were expelled from France. He must have carried into exile some faint recollections of the Emperor, of his kind grandmother, Josephine, of the court of the Tuileries, of the alarums and excursions that heralded the downfall, and of the strange foreign potentates who came and went at Malmaison. As these pictures faded they would have been retouched and coloured by others' memories and suggestions; but when news came to Augsburg that Napoleon was dead, the boy, then in his fourteenth year, was obliged to confess in a letter to his mother, "What grieves me very much is not to have seen him,

even once, before his death; for in Paris I was so young that it is only in my heart, almost, that I remember him." Piously he added, "When I do wrong, I think of this Great Man, and I seem to feel his shade within, telling me to keep myself worthy of the name, Napoleon." Thus the Emperor was already deified in the mind of the boy who had made his first communion at the old Catholic shrine of Einsiedeln.

But it is the fate of all gods to be refashioned to the liking of their adorers. Louis Napoleon remembered his uncle only as a presence, not as a man. Called upon to worship him, he would naturally invest him with the qualities he found amiable and seek to divest him of those repugnant to his own nature. Hortense's son early revealed himself as a singularly gentle, silent child. He did not seem born to be a soldier or a monarch. Asked, when he was four or five years old, what he would do if he were called upon to earn his own living, he replied, "Sell violets, like the little boy outside the Tuileries." He was moved, as no Bonaparte was ever moved, by the sight of poverty and affliction. It is no fable that he sometimes stripped himself of his coat and shoes to give them to the poor. One wonders what Napoleon would have made of him. Certain it is, that brooding over the godlike being of whom his mother and his nurses told him, he imagined a Napoleon vastly different from the real one. The eagle with bloody plumage could hardly have captured the imagination of the shrinking, compassionate boy. Growing older, he must have learned things about this divinity very hard to swallow—the murder of the Duc d'Enghien and the massacre of the Turkish prisoners at Jaffa, for instance; but there was always his mother at hand to explain these away or justify them, as mothers expounding the Bible try to soothe or blunt the moral indignation aroused by the Deluge, the massacre of the Egyptian first-born, and other exploits of Jehovah. Talking little, holding tenaciously to his own opinions, as Hor-

tense remarked, calling him her "*doux entêté*," the boy beheld Napoleon through the medium of his own ideals as Alexandre de Beauharnais persisted to the last in seeing the Republic.

Later in life, as Frenchmen will, Napoleon III magnified the part his mother played in his life. Her semi-divorced husband, the ex-king of Holland, soundly rated her for having neglected their children's education when the elder surviving boy, Napoleon Louis, was handed over to his custody by a decree of the French courts; when the younger paid him a visit, he complained that he too was badly brought up and had been taught to speak lightly of dignities, especially of the clergy. Another defect of which King Louis complained, his son must speedily have outgrown—talkativeness. Louis Napoleon, at the age of nineteen, himself said he had learnt nothing, and would have to start his education over again. This indictment of his teachers is unjust; so is the bulk of his father's accusations. But whoever decisively influenced the future Emperor in his youth, it was not Hortense. She was an easy-going, pleasure-loving woman, quite without ideals, and tending, as such women do in middle life, towards conservatism and distrust of the people. The daughter of a noble guillotined by the Revolution may be pardoned for that. The sharp contrast between her views and her son's became apparent in his letters before he was twenty.

Decidedly more sympathetic, intellectually, was his tutor (succeeding in 1820 to a certain rather casual Abbé Bertrand), one, Philippe Le Bas, the son of an old *conventionnel* and not improbably, himself, a conspirer against the Empire. A stern grave Mentor was Le Bas, who had no patience at all with Queen Hortense's perpetual gallivantings and who objected to her periodical visits to Italy as unnecessarily distracting his pupil. At Augsburg he scented another danger in the romantic vapours of Werther that lingered in the quaint narrow

streets. Cruelly he set his foot upon the name of a German girl, which twelve years old Louis had caused to blossom forth in mustard and cress upon his particular garden-plot, an act of severity so far forgotten by the boy, that as a young man, he recalled his silent adoration of some unknown girl at her window, three years later, as the most exquisite sensation of his life, and the only time he had really been in love. But that other tenderness of his, the son of the old *conventionnel* would not have checked. Upon Louis Napoleon's sympathy with the poor and lowly he would certainly have tried to graft democratic ideals; to fan the latent revolutionary ardour of the Beauharnais and to reconcile it with the prescribed devotion of the nephew to the head of the house.

Le Bas was Hortense's own selection. He justified it at least by making of her son a good latinist. With his republicanism she could not quarrel, for had not the great Napoleon, to the surprise and secret amusement of those who had known him intimately in the purple, discovered himself as the Sword and Buckler of the Revolution, the very Genius of Liberal monarchy? Louis's conception of his uncle was warranted by the reports of conversations brought back from St. Helena. In any case, the boy's political future could not be predicted. He was not his uncle's heir. He was only the second of Hortense's sons; and at Schönbrunn still lived the Emperor's own son, the official exponent of Bonapartism. All the older generation, too, were still above ground—King Joseph, King Louis, King Jerome, and the disinherited Lucien. These had certainly renounced all but their material and financial interest in the imperial cause; but it was hardly the young Louis's place or duty to pick up the fallen eagle standard.

He continued his studies at Augsburg till he was seventeen, spending the vacations across the Swiss border, at his mother's château of Arenenberg, overlooking the Bodensee, and on visits with her to Rome

and Florence. He had picked up a German accent and not a little German romanticism. The *farouche* Le Bas, relieved of his functions and considering himself ill-used by Hortense, went home, to become, in course of time, President of the Institute of France, and to refuse allegiance to his one-time pupil. His departure left Louis very much at the mercy of Colonel Parquin, a veteran of the Napoleonic wars, who after being expelled from France for conspiring against the Bourbons, had married Louise Cochelet, Hortense's old schoolmate and companion, and settled down close to Arenenberg. "Seeing the two get together after lunch," wrote Mlle. Masuyer, another of the ex-Queen's ladies, "and hearing the Colonel shouting under the trees, as if he was still commanding his squadrons, I cannot suppose his influence upon his pupil is exactly that of Mentor upon Telemachus, or that his counsels are those of wisdom, moderation and patience." The hero whom his nephew, encouraged by Le Bas, had grown to regard as the champion of the Revolution now took on once more the vivid hues of the Conqueror.

The Emperor's nephew must be a soldier. No doubt the Colonel took that for granted, and the silent lad, though he had been heard to say he wanted only to be a country gentleman, did not demur. With the faint flicker of a smile he thought of his worthy father at Florence, of Uncle Joseph, of the philosopher, Uncle Lucien. . . . Excellent men, all of them, but not one of them the Bonaparte whom any youth of mettle would propose to himself as an example. Nor was it dreamed of in those days that the glorious principles of the Revolution could be spread solely by pacific means. Louis Napoleon braced his shoulders, straightened his back, and began to follow the exercises of a Baden regiment on the esplanade of Constanz. He went in for riding and swimming, and shaking off his natural lethargy, achieved proficiency in both.

He was preparing himself for a part, but could only

speculate what that part could be. To the cousin at Schönbrunn he wrote, assuring him of his affection and fealty. Although only a subaltern Bonaparte, he was not suffered to forget his potential importance. Not only was he forbidden to set foot in his native land, but such restrictions were placed by the ambassadors upon his movements that in a letter to his father he complained that before long it might be necessary to convene a congress before he could stir.

For one of his name, clearly there was no opening in the armies of Germany, or of the Great Powers. But Switzerland had long been his home, and Switzerland was the only republic in Europe. Napoleon's nephew at the age of twenty-two entered the army of the Confederation as a volunteer and was admitted to the Federal Artillery School at Thun.

II

It was the year 1830. Louis Napoleon applied himself very seriously to the apprenticeship of arms, drilling long hours every day, bivouacking near the tail of the glaciers, and toiling over Bernese passes in the dust of gun and tumbril. His commander was Colonel Dufour, who had served under the Empire and lived to crush the separatist forces in his own country. The cadet learnt not only the soldier's trade, but made a particular study of the military system and the constitution of the Confederation. He might have been going to be a Swiss officer all his life. Those who had their ears to the ground that summer must have been prepared for the outbreaks which occurred in the autumn and culminated in the Sonderbund war of 1847. The cantons were republics, but not democracies, and were divided by secular jealousies. To many it seemed that salvation lay only in a return to the Act of Mediation and Napoleon's constitution of 1803. To the Emperor's nephew

Switzerland might seem to offer too narrow a field for ambition; but more fantastic ideas afterwards possessed him than that of making himself the champion of Swiss democracy and the architect of Swiss unity.

If for a moment he played with such an idea, it was banished by that flash of summer lightning over Paris. To the young Swiss soldier in his school by the calm waters of the Thunersee came the news of the Revolution of July. "The tricolour floats once more over Paris," he wrote ecstatically to his mother. "Happy they who were first to restore its ancient lustre!" The Bourbons were down again; the next courier might announce the declaration of the Republic or—the proclamation of Napoleon II. Frenchmen were fighting on the barricades, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was playing the soldier in a Swiss uniform on Swiss soil. He might have got across the frontier, but he would not have known under which banner to fight. Presently it was known that only a few cries had been raised for Napoleon II, and that the Republicans had no plans. The Duke of Orleans was Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and next was heard of as King. The Revolution had only resulted in a change of dynasty. Brother Napoleon Louis, at Florence, deeply engaged in an industrial enterprise, refused the call of a few Bonapartists to put himself at the head of a rising in France or Corsica. Far be it from him, he said, to kindle a civil war among his countrymen. The cousin at Schönbrunn made no sign.

The cadet Bonaparte must have chafed at his juniority. On September 10th he returned to Arenenberg, to learn that the proscription of his family had been renewed by the government of Louis Philip. The doors of France remained closed, but the revolutionary flame had spread far beyond her boundaries. Belgium had broken away from Holland; Poland was on the eve of revolt; all over Germany the people were quarrelling with their rulers. In Italy every despot doubled his guard and warned

Austria to stand by. Even the dreadfully law-abiding English for once showed a praiseworthy disposition to break their rulers' heads. In Hortense's cabinet mother and son read the newspapers avidly, and in low tones discussed the European situation. The ex-Queen's supreme desire was to settle down once more in her own country. She had friends at the new court, even about the person of the new monarch, and was therefore frightened of doing anything which might annoy Louis Philip or his ministers. Heartily she approved the negative policy of her elder boy. Besides, a Napoleonic restoration would only mean placing upon the throne a youth half Austrian by birth, wholly Austrian by education, and the son of the woman who had supplanted her mother. It would have been Napoleon without the Bonaparte.

Louis held his peace. Either because she had no suspicion of his revolutionary fervour, or because, on the contrary, she dared not leave him to himself, Hortense took him with her on her accustomed visit to Italy in November 1830. With regret the Prince parted from his dog, Fido. At Bologna, after dinner, he declaimed some patriotic Italian verses, and going on to the theatre, joined in a demonstration against a singer believed to be patronized by the authorities. Distressed and alarmed, Hortense hurried him on to Florence. King Louis, of course, was not there. On the occasion of his wife's visits he tactfully absented himself. They were received by Napoleon Louis, recently married to his cousin, the daughter of King Joseph. His attention seemed to be divided between his wife and his paper mills at Serravezza. He was four years older than his brother, and his mother no doubt expected he would exercise a steadying influence.

After a fortnight's stay, Hortense and Louis continued their journey. Near Viterbo they fell in with King Louis, returning to Florence, and had a talk with him by the roadside. Italy was very much disturbed, they agreed;

the hopes of the patriots had been kindled by rumours of French intervention on their behalf. His ex-Majesty, long since forgetful of his dalliance with the doctrines of Rousseau, was all for Pope and piety, peace and quiet. Of course, the Bonapartes had good reason to be grateful to the Pope. Banned almost everywhere else in Europe, in Rome they had nearly all of them found a home.

There Hortense had hopes of passing the winter pleasantly and tranquilly as usual. She opened her salon and paid the customary visits. Valérie Masuyer, though she had fallen in love with the elder brother, could not help noticing that "the cold and unsympathetic" Louis absented himself often and mysteriously. One day he brought in a man wanted by the Pope's police and hid him in his mother's palace. A day or two after Hortense was told that her son must quit the Papal territory there and then. On his previous visits to Rome he had become known as a wild harum-scarum youth, fond of galloping at full speed along the street to the public danger. He was not credited with any serious thoughts. Now, he, known to be a Bonaparte Prince, had been seen riding about the city displaying the Italian tricolour. He packed in haste, and departed for Florence, leaving the refugee in charge of his mother.

The future Emperor was not a sworn carbonaro, nor is there any reason to suppose that he had so far acted under any other person's order. But at Florence he was approached by Menotti, a prime mover in the cause of Italian nationhood. Disappointed by the Duke of Modena, who had at first pretended to be in sympathy with the patriots, Menotti perceived much virtue in the name of Bonaparte. Napoleon had been the first to give the word Italy a political significance. People might suppose his nephews to be the forerunners of a French army of deliverance. The rôle indicated under the trees and the Cascine, appealed first of all to Louis's romantic side—he fancied himself as the hero of an epic. Some-

how, too, he could not help being against reactionary government and inclining toward all revolutionaries. And, like most young men of his type, he could hardly separate personal ambition from his devotion to a cause. Had not the Divine Uncle told his family to establish themselves in Rome, where they were destined to play a great part? Louis Napoleon had heard of Rienzi . . . .

Such a moment he had often dreamed of in misty Augsburg. His elder brother did what he told him. On his death-bed, Napoleon Louis described Louis Napoleon as a profound thinker, his superior in intelligence, and likely to become a great statesman. Away they went to the headquarters of the revolutionaries. At the beginning of February 1831 the insurrection broke out, prematurely, in the Duchies and the Legations. There was rioting in Rome. Hortense hurried to Florence, to find her sons gone. Louis had left a letter. "Our name," he said, "obliges us to help a suffering nation which calls upon us. Contrive that I may seem in the eyes of my sister-in-law to have carried off her husband, for he cannot bear the thought that he has concealed a single one of his projects from her."

The young wife wept. Mother and father cursed their sons' folly. For once, they were united and able to tolerate each other's company. King Louis wrote to the Holy Father, protesting his undying loyalty and gratitude, and repudiating his unnatural and degenerate sons. Hortense, who had written to her son from Rome, soundly arguing that the Italian nationalists would never achieve their purpose without the aid of French bayonets, more sensibly busied herself with enquiring exactly where the brothers were and how she could coax them back.

As she learned from Armandi, at one time Napoleon Louis's teacher and now the insurgent leader, they were in Umbria, organizing the revolt. Riding at the head of his partisans along the deep leafy valley of the Tiber, the cradle of the Latin race, the younger Bonaparte exulted.

From every little walled town that eyed him suspiciously from its hill-top, at one time or another some soldier of fortune had issued, to mount a precarious throne. This was romance, but there was the real thing, too. There were shots exchanged with a none-too-eager squad of Papal troops. This was battle—in a few minutes, this was victory. On that stony upland, the hills still echoing far away to the report of a few musket shots, Louis Napoleon felt he was not unworthy to inherit the laurels of Marengo and Austerlitz. Applying the lessons of Thun, he surveyed Civita Castellana from the flanks of Soracte and planned its reduction. A few miles away, at Terni, his brother received at the outposts a messenger from his uncle, King Jerome, entreating the brothers to quit this fooling, and painting the dismay and anxiety of their parents. The Prince sent the messenger back to Rome with a letter to His Holiness, stating the grievances and the demands of his revolted subjects. At Bologna, encouraged by the French consul's definite promise of help, the patriots declared the temporal power of the Pontiff at an end and proclaimed the republic of the United Italian Provinces.

Then, from their dreams of martial glory, from the vision of entering the Eternal City as conquerors, the brothers were roused by an order from Armandi to relinquish their commands and to retire to Bologna. The order, which had been wrung from their general by Hortense, was obeyed, but both young men vowed they would re-engage as privates in the republican ranks. They had done the nationalist cause more harm than good. Hearing that a Bonaparte was at the head of the uprising, Gregory XVI had appealed to Austria for help. The Whitecoats crossed the Po. Jerome warned the distracted ex-Queen that her sons would certainly be shot if they fell into their hands. From "gloomy and towered Bologna" the patriots retired along the Æmilian Way towards the coast. At Forli Napoleon Louis fell sick and could travel no farther.

A day or two later he died of measles, complicated, as it seems, by broncho-pneumonia. Louis had only just time to bury his brother and escape before the Austrians entered the town.

At Pesaro he met his mother. Provided with a British passport for "Mrs. Hamilton and her two sons," the brave woman, while her husband raved and lamented, had come in search of her boys. Louis was spared the pain of being the first to announce to her the death of the second of her sons. Rumour, running like a forest fire down the mountain spine of Italy, had met her at Foligno; refugees fleeing before the Austrians had confirmed it. There was no time to indulge her grief if she was to save Louis. If he were not shot, as Jerome had predicted, he would undoubtedly be immured in an Austrian fortress. The little party fell back to Ancona. The port was full of fugitives, all who could seeking to escape by ship. To make matters worse, Louis manifested the first symptoms of the disease that had killed his brother. Decidedly, he must have reflected, luck had deserted the Bonapartes. He may have been sustained, as later writers like to suggest, by a belief in his "star"—more likely he found a sombre consolation in the magnitude of the catastrophe and in experiencing the not uncommon fate of historical heroes.

Assisted by her clever and strong-headed companion, Valérie Masuyer, the ex-Queen grappled with the situation. When the Austrians entered she hid her son and made them believe he had already got away by sea. They gave her a passport to Leghorn. Louis fought down his sickness, and, disguised as a lackey, passed with her through the Austrian lines across into Tuscany. There she availed herself of her English passport, the part of the other son mentioned therein being taken by an Italian refugee named Zappi. So they got across the peninsula to Genoa. A few days later they crossed the long wooden bridge over the Var, and at the beginning of April, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, under the name of

"Mrs. Hamilton's son," once more set foot in France, the land he did not remember, the land of his most ambitious dreams.

It was also the land where, according to the letter of the law, it was death for a Bonaparte to set foot. The safer course would seem to have been to make for the Swiss frontier. But either because Hortense feared the Powers might forbid her son's return to Switzerland or much more probably, because the Prince was resolved to try his luck in France, the intrepid travellers continued their journey to Paris. Having as he thought shaken off the fever, Louis gazed about him, eyes and ears wide open for France and things French. At their stopping places he and young Zappi strolled about the streets, sat in the cafés, and talked with everybody. Greatly moved by the first remembered sight of a French uniform and by some officers' sympathetic references to his family, he sat down and penned an appeal to Louis Philip. He had sought refuge in France, he said, because it was the only land where it was not accounted a crime to have fought for liberty; he craved permission to remain and to serve his country as a private soldier. Hortense, very much the French mother who always thinks she knows better than her son, did not wholly approve of the letter, and told him to hold it over.

They travelled by much the same route which Napoleon had followed upon his return from Elba. If the parallel was not encouraging, neither was their progress as spectacular. At Fontainebleau Hortense showed her son the chapel in which he had been christened and the rooms she had inhabited, without being recognized by servants she had known. With a thrill, it may be imagined, Louis Napoleon entered Paris. No doubt, the enchantment which distance lends to the view, survived a little while in this case, as it often does; but it is significant that Napoleon III went a long way towards rebuilding Paris altogether. As Mrs. Hamilton and family, the party "registered" at the Hotel de Hollande

in the Rue de la Paix, on April 23rd, 1831. Mlle. Masuyer notes that the Prince had his own exit. In Paris, thought his mother, a young man likes to enjoy himself; and *le pauvre garçon* had not had much opportunity of doing so since he sallied out of Florence, three months before. For herself, Hortense looked forward to getting into mourning and indulging her grief for her dead son.

Paris was home, and here she wished to remain. It must have seemed that the Bonapartes had arrived at an auspicious moment. For the new King, the highly constitutional King of the French, the first sovereign of the House of Orleans, was advertising his admiration for the great Napoleon, and had given orders for his statue to be replaced on the top of the Vendôme column in sight of our travellers' windows. This attitude was not as suicidal as it now seems—the hero's heir was an Austrian prince, and if he came back he could only come back, like Louis XVIII, as the nominee of a foreign Power. While her son slipped out by his backdoor to the boulevards, Hortense that same evening wrote to her friend, M. d'Houdetot, who was one of Louis Philip's aides-de-camp. He came next day and took her letter to the King. His Majesty was astounded to learn she was in Paris. He had had no reason to doubt the rumour which said she had sailed to Malta, there to rejoin her son. The women of his family had been so much indebted to Hortense's kindness during the Empire that he could not refuse to see her, and an interview took place in a small room at the Palais Royal, so small that the King of the French and the ex-Queen of Holland sat on the bed. Everything passed off most pleasantly—and inconclusively. Louis Philip spoke of repealing the proscription laws at the earliest possible moment. If Hortense, meanwhile, would like to stay for a cure at Vichy, why shouldn't she? As to her affairs, and the money due to her under the old 1814 treaties, he, the King, would look into that, and act, if she liked, as her

man of affairs. But she must understand he was a strictly constitutional King and could do little without his ministers' sanction. But everything would be all right—quite all right. The great thing was for the Bonapartes to preserve their incognito—once it was known they were in Paris, trouble would begin.

Casimir Périer, the silver-haired Prime Minister, alone among the ministers was taken into their confidence, and called next day. He was not quite so cordial as his Sovereign, but glanced at Louis's letter, made him rewrite it in order to expunge certain references to the Austrians, and took it away to give to the King. He was anxious for the Bonapartes to get on to England, whence they could return through France, if they wished, to Switzerland. This was not what either of them wanted. Presently, Louis, hearing that d'Houdetot had called again, asked if he had brought the answer to his letter. Yes—Louis Philip saw his way to erase their names from the proscription, and might even confer upon the young man military rank and a peerage. The romantic Prince's native caution suggested the immediate query—"And in return for these fine things?" Well . . . . it would be desirable for him to relinquish the name of Bonaparte and borrow a description from his mother's dukedom of St. Leu. Ah, that—never! Louis Napoleon gesticulated more than was his want. His mother did not attempt to persuade him. He went out again that night.

All this time revolution was growling in the streets of Paris. From her hotel Hortense witnessed a demonstration round the Column which was put an end to by the authorities by means of a fire-hose. The ex-Queen (or the Duchesse de St. Leu as she was officially described in royal France) tried to keep her bargain with the government and to escape recognition. Once or twice she was followed by old Bonapartist partisans and was at shifts to put them off the scent. Louis, no one in Paris would have recognized unless he introduced him-

self. Did he introduce himself? Years after it was asserted by the Duc d'Aumale that he was conspiring all the while with the Republican leaders against the King, who had forborne to arrest him. Probably he did no more than call and make himself known to them. No one in the crowd on the Place Vendôme, at least, was aware that he was looking on. Literally, perhaps, he was not; for he succumbed now to the microbes which he had carried in his blood with him from Italy. When a messenger came from the government to intimate that in view of the popular effervescence they must leave France at once, he found the Prince prostrate in bed, festooned with leeches. But Casimir Périer, that austere banker-politician, was urgent and inflexible. The Bonapartes must go; and on May 6th they drove out of Paris, the skies weeping sympathetically.

Louis's first attempt upon his uncle's capital had been a sorry fiasco. Miserably they drove northward to Calais. The crossing was not less miserable; the sea was unkind. Louis was cross with the stupid people at Dover because they couldn't understand his English. But at Canterbury he was hugely elated by a flaring placard which proclaimed the victory of the Liberals in the great Reform election. He and his mother were sufficiently recovered to quarrel about English politics. All that she found good in this country—and that was nearly everything—she attributed to its discipline, respect for law and property, and the influence of the great landed proprietors; he attributed it to parliamentary institutions, to the right of free speech, and to the growth of liberal ideas. On the whole, however, he was not much in love with the country which was to afford him a home and a sepulchre.

Their reception in London should have consoled them somewhat for their cool welcome in Paris. Hortense took a house in the West End and was made much of by Lord Holland and the leaders of the Whig party. Presumably they did not mind that at heart Beauharnais's

daughter was very much of a Tory, and that she talked about keeping the common people in their proper places. Mlle. Masuyer observed that she did not get on very well with the lively and outspoken Lady Holland. With the Tory ladies she was a great success, and invitations were showered upon the late Emperor's step-daughter and sister-in-law. Louis, though still in feeble health, went about with his mother. To her annoyance he cared less for her smart English friends than for certain Bonapartists then in London. Most interesting of these (though not in those days to him) was young Walewski, whom everybody knew to be a son of the great Napoleon. Came Achille Murat, sometime Crown Prince of Naples and now postmaster of a township in Florida, U.S.A. He intimated that he was in Europe as the agent of Joseph Bonaparte, and had a scheme for forming a committee on which the Orleanists, the Bonapartists and the Republicans should be represented, to decide by a plebiscite the form of government in France. Murat was in touch with an ex-imperial officer named Lennox, who had deserted the Orleans faction for the Extreme Left and was now running a paper called *La Révolution*—a revolution in the direction of Bonapartism. Mme. Lennox, a charming woman, came over to see the Prince; it was probably at her persuasion that he bought fifteen thousand shares in the paper. Poor Lennox, however, was not able to do him much good, for he was constantly in prison, and his miserable sheet expired under the weight of successive prosecutions and fines. The editor, finding his native element so unkind, took up ballooning, and died not long after.

If he had not conspired in Paris the Prince was certainly conspiring now, to the increasing vexation of his mother. Still waters run deep, sagely opined Valérie Masuyer, noting the silent young man's mysterious goings and comings and perpetual demands upon her as the family treasurer for money. He feigned to be after the girls and that they were after him. This Hortense

would not believe. With a singular absence of maternal pride she declared that no one would run after Louis for his looks—the minxes who made eyes at him, especially the French ones, were either spies or trying to draw him into a plot. Pouncing on her son in Kensington Gardens, she soundly rated him. No one knew what he was up to. Once he let fly: "If I hadn't been down with the measles, that Fifth of May, I had only to go down into the Place Vendôme and the crowd would have followed me. Casimir Périer knew that. That's why he was in such a hurry to get rid of me."

It seemed he was wrong, for Talleyrand, who was Louis Philip's ambassador in London, told the Duchesse de St. Leu that there would be no objection to her passing through Paris upon her return. But Hortense decided that her son was not to be trusted in so highly charged an atmosphere. While awaiting their passports she took him off to Tunbridge Wells, under the common delusion that nothing ever happens there. Here the Prince fell quite romantically in love with a Miss Godfrey. Of course, he couldn't marry her, being what he was—this he explained quite frankly; but the lady vowed she would never forget him, and they both enjoyed their romantic situation. These preoccupations will keep him out of mischief, said Hortense, who, being herself ailing and very fractious, took up a lot of his time.

She had reason to be unhappy. No further news had come from d'Houdetot, whom she regarded as her ambassador at the Palais Royal. Probably, one of her son's letters had been found on the person of Lennox when he was last arrested, and that would end her hopes of recovering the fortune promised her in 1814. She abandoned all hopes of Louis Philip, and the Prince realized that his petty plots had come to nothing. Viciously he remarked that he wouldn't accept rank in the French army now if the Citizen-King were to offer it. Distinctly crestfallen, the Bonapartes set out for home; this time under the style of Mme. d'Arenberg et

fils. It was a melancholy and sentimental journey, a pilgrimage to various Napoleonic shrines. Hortense showed her son the column at Boulogne which immortalized the fact that Napoleon had not invaded England; they stood before Josephine's tomb at Rueil and were denied admission as strangers to the old home at Malmaison. Skirting Paris, they proceeded via Melun and Sens. At a fair the ex-Queen found her own portrait was being sold, along with the Emperor's. But everybody seemed to regard the Bonapartes as a race of demigods belonging to a bygone age and by no means to be called upon to rule in modern times.

And so they got home to peaceful Arenenberg in friendly cosy Switzerland. Hortense little thought when she set out (for Rome) of running such a rig.

III

He had made his entrance upon the stage of history—that much Louis Napoleon, reviewing the experiences of the preceding twelve months and balancing results, could set down on the credit side. He had had his baptism of fire; and discussing those minor operations in the Apennines with the deeply-interested Parquin, he was confirmed in the conviction that he had acquitted himself well. Yes, undoubtedly he had risen to the occasion. Ambitious always of becoming an historical character, he had found himself equal to the part. He could conspire, fight, command, escape, and intrigue with the best. He was no mere dreamer, as he had at moments half suspected, but a man of action.

This assurance made it easier for him to decline an invitation from certain Polish insurrectionaries to put himself at their head. His mettle no longer stood in need of testing. He was qualifying for a more serious rôle than that of mere knight-errant. Death had brought

him one step nearer to the imperial succession; but the disquieting fact emerged from his late experience that Europe accounted this no succession at all. There had been a great, a miraculous man called Napoleon, who had carved out an empire with his sword, who had died, and was buried. Men regarded him as complete in himself, and no more looked for a successor to Napoleon than to Achilles or Christopher Columbus. Had Cromwell founded a dynasty? . . . . The reflection was discouraging. A greater man than Louis Napoleon might have trusted to his own worth and relied not at all upon the fame of his forbears. But whether he still cherished the belief that Napoleon embodied a principle or whether he clung to his name as a definite asset, he busied himself with pen and paper to persuade the world that there was a Napoleonic tradition and that it belonged to Napoleon's heirs. And it must have seemed that he had not wasted his time, when in July, 1832, by the death of the Duke of Reichstadt, the heritage became his alone.

The young man who had flaunted the Republican colours under the windows of the Quirinal and marched down the valley of the Tiber to conquer Rome kept his head. His inheritance must be very carefully, very warily managed. To Vieillard, his lifelong friend and his dead brother's tutor, he wrote, "I know that I am much by name, nothing as yet by myself. Aristocrat by birth, democrat by nature and opinion, owing everything apparently to inheritance, and everything, in reality, to election." If there were Napoleonist devotees in Paris ready to shout for Napoleon III before the Tuileries he did not call upon them. It may be the failure of the Duchesse de Berry in the western departments had its lesson for him. He turned again, in a new mood of responsibility, to the sheets he had written and which Chateaubriand, almost approvingly, had read through. That they expressed the Duke of Reichstadt's conception of his mission is doubtful. Now they were pub-

lished at Zurich, under the title of *Rêveries politiques*, as the manifesto of the Emperor's political legatee.

After painting the state of Europe in sufficiently gloomy colours, the author of the *Rêveries* declares that the "nature of the Empire was to consolidate a throne upon the principles of the Revolution." He goes on to enunciate certain elementary principles. "The opinions here advanced," he continues, "show my principles to be entirely Republican." But seeing that human nature is far from perfection and that the Rhine is not the ocean, he prefers—apparently, as an expedient—the monarchical form of government. He traces a constitution. The Sovereign, styled *Emperor of the French Republic*, is to be nominated by the Senate and voted for direct by the people. The choice, we gather, is to be made from the deceased Sovereign's family. If the first nominee is rejected by the people, then the Senate will propose another. The nation is not to have the right of nominating its ruler—only of confirming or disallowing his election. We catch here an echo of the old Anglo-Saxon idea of picking the King from a royal stock, without regard to any fixed order of succession. In its details this constitution approximates rather to the American than to the English model. The central idea is of a strong executive—the Emperor—emanating from the people, checked by but not at the mercy of a parliament, also elected by popular vote.

As a manifesto this publication for the time being failed. On July 29th, 1833, the *Tribune* of Paris asked, "Where are the Bonapartes? Not one in France! . . . Not one among them, young or old, with courage enough to come in our midst and claim the title of citizen. The Bonaparte débris delude themselves that they can create a party, when they have proved themselves to be destitute of strength, imagination, audacity and youth!"

"Where are the Bonapartes?" Only one of them answered. Lucien wrote from London, arguing that as

good citizens, respectful of the law, they were all where they ought to be—in exile. He talked like an Englishman—respect for the law never commanded the respect of more high-mettled peoples. His nephew did not, apparently, reply—unless he considered his *Rêveries* a sufficient answer. Further enquiry on the part of the *Tribune* would have revealed this young and most important of the Bonapartes as a Swiss officer, more deeply concerned than before for the consolidation of the Confederation and for equipping it for war. He had to occupy himself somehow, and all this was practice in statecraft. But in his *Considérations sur la Suisse*, published in the same year, he managed to introduce a good many allusions to his great uncle and to advertise his peculiar political views. The Switzers were so pleased with him that they made him a captain in the Bernese artillery and an honorary citizen of Thurgau. The office of landamman of the canton he politely declined. He was also busy with a *Manual of Artillery*, which he published in 1834.

"Where are the Bonapartes?" The query was also put by Louis Philip's government, which maintained its spies in Switzerland, to the annoyance of the federal authorities. There was little political activity at Arenenberg to report. Louis Napoleon courageously dashed in to save a woman and a child in a carriage, whose horses had bolted. He was studious but manly, went in for the usual field sports, flirted and made love. There was talk of a Swiss girl who had refused his hand; of a French girl, Louise de Crenay; finally, of his cousin, Mathilde, the daughter of King Jerome, who came on a visit in the spring of '36. Already rumour had made him a suitor for the plump hand of the young Queen of Portugal, widowed by the early death of his cousin, the Duke of Leuchtenberg—contradicting which rumour, he made it plain that he had no intention of relinquishing his status as a Frenchman. But before long, he wrote to his mother, he would marry and settle down. Hortense

was growing old and said that what Europe wanted above all was Peace.

She seems to have given up attempts to fathom her mysterious son: yet there was no mystery—he was merely waiting for something to turn up. He would talk quite a lot on occasions, made no secret of his love affairs, would be frank, especially in letters, about his political views; but he listened more than he talked. He listened, rather more than Hortense knew, to a man of his own age, named Fialin de Persigny, a newcomer destined to be his lifelong henchman and associate. Brooding over the glories of the Empire and contrasting them with the diminished rôle of France, this man, who had held warrant rank in the French army, became a Napoleonic fanatic. From some ancestors in the Forez he borrowed the second name by which he is known in history, then journeyed to the quiet fields about Uxbridge to offer his services to King Joseph. But the eldest of the Bonapartes had renounced dynastic ambitions. He passed on this knight-errant, with a note of introduction, to the restless scheming nephew at Arenenberg. Louis Napoleon from between half-shut lids glanced from the letter to the bearer. A little odd it must have seemed that this young man should have come out of France, begging to be allowed to devote his life to the other young man's cause. Royalty accepts this unsolicited service as a matter of course; but Louis Napoleon was hardly as royal as all that. However, one romantic quickly understands another. Persigny recognized in the Prince the leader his soul craved for; the Prince recognized him as the ideal partisan, trusted above all the other hangers-on, the Italian refugees, the French malcontents, and the Bonapartist dilettanti who came and went at the château by the Bodensee. "Don't you think I know a man when I see one?" he afterwards said, when some rival follower tried to sow distrust between them.

Persigny's coming may have had a decisive influence

on the future Emperor's career. Napoleon's ambition seems to have been rekindled, at least moved to action, by the new recruit's ardour. At that moment the chief spokesman of the Republican party in France was the editor, Armand Carrel, the knight *sans peur et sans reproche* of journalism. To him by a partisan the Prince sent a copy of his artillery manual. A conversation, as had been hoped for, followed. Carrel disclaimed the leadership of the party, to which, it should be said, Republicans of the genuine red type would never have promoted him. That rôle, he said, required a greater name, greater prestige. "If Louis Napoleon," he said, "could forget his hereditary claims and take his stand upon the essential sovereignty of the people, a great part might be allotted to him." Armand Carrel did not live to see him play that part. He was shot in a duel by his famous rival, Emile de Girardin, in July, 1836. To Louis it must have seemed that the moment for getting himself accepted as leader of the French Republicans had gone by. His grandfather, that fervent apostle of the Revolution, had succumbed to the suspicion created by his name and lineage. The sons of Beauharnais's slayers would hesitate to acclaim as their chief one in whom the imperial tradition was now officially vested.

Men are usually best equipped for bold action and high endeavour in their late twenties. They easily persuade themselves that their hour is at hand. Persigny, presumably at Louis's expense, scoured the eastern departments under divers names and disguises, recalling the glories of the imperial regime to men's minds, recruiting sympathisers, collecting information. He was not often seen at Arenenberg. His reports, instead, were rendered to the Prince at places in Baden, near the French frontier, where French tourists were accustomed to resort. These reports were unintentionally misleading. In reality, the monarchy of July had taken a firm hold on the affections of the bourgeoisie, while the populace, cheated and disillusioned, were more disposed to listen

THE DUC FIALIN DE PERSIGNY

to the new economic theories than to rhetoric about military glory. It was on the army that the plotters fixed their highest hopes; but though no one respected Louis Philip, his generals, his own son among them, were reaping fresh laurels for France in Algeria. Waterloo was twenty years ago, Austerlitz and Jena were remembered only by the senior officers; the ranks were filled by a new generation that knew not Napoleon.

For which reason the young Bonaparte must have been the more pleased with a letter brought to him by Valérie Masuyer, on her return from a visit to a sister in Strasbourg, at the end of April, 1836. Colonel Vaudrey, commanding the 4th artillery regiment at that place, expressed a great desire to meet him. Perhaps the Prince had already been prepared by Persigny for these overtures and knew that the Colonel nourished a private grievance against the King of the French. A meeting was arranged at Baden-Baden. There Vaudrey was presented by His Highness to another very valuable adherent. This was Eleanor Gordon, the widow of an English commissariat officer, and the daughter of a captain in the old Imperial Guard. Eleanor was a professional singer, and is said to have first met Louis Napoleon in London. Personally, she afterwards declared, he attracted her as little as another woman might; but inherited devotion to the name he bore and a taste for adventure brought her over to his side. She was a good-looking, lively woman, also twenty-eight years of age, and her business was to seduce the Colonel. As the result of a honeymoon spent in the Côte d'Or she was able to assure the Prince that Vaudrey was pledged to his cause.

The plan as now elaborated was to gain the garrison of Strasbourg, and with this force, estimated at twelve thousand men with a hundred guns, to advance upon Paris. The eastern cities, Persigny was sure, would open their gates, and by the time he entered Champagne the Prince should be at the head of fifty thousand men. Before the July government could muster as large a

force its authority would be disavowed in other parts of France, probably in Paris itself. Louis Napoleon would enter the capital in triumph. The conspirators in subsequent years looked back on this plan and found no fault with it. They were French, and ought to have known their countrymen; yet it seems they forgot that the Revolutions of France always began in Paris, and that the people of the departments were seldom anxious to fire the first shot.

While the household at Arenenberg were sympathetically watching the progress of his love affair with Mathilde and noting his manner when some former sweetheart paid a call, the Prince was corresponding with Vaudrey under the name of "Louise Wernert," the great enterprise being referred to as "her" marriage. Meantime, he got in touch with other officers of the Strasbourg garrison, not with uniform success. A Captain Raindre, whom he met on the German side of the Rhine, reported his vaguely-worded proposals to his superiors; and a tentative letter sent to General Voirol, the commandant of the fortress, was forwarded to the government. It was lucky for Louis, hovering so close to the frontier, that the King of the French showed more respect than his uncle had done for the inviolability of foreign territory. Bolder than the Duc d'Enghien, the Bonaparte crossed the river and presented himself one night to a large gathering of officers. Their reception of him was so friendly that he waited, now, only to fix the hour to strike.

The evening of October 23rd, 1836, the Prince was observed by Valérie Masuyer to pay little attention to his old flame, Mlle. Crenay. His manner was so dull and preoccupied that she thought he must be ill. With those quiet lustreless eyes of his he must have been surveying that pretty, brilliant salon, filled with charming girls, with chatter and with music, and wondering, as men do on the eve of hazardous undertakings, whether it was worth while to risk all this. He might have answered

that he could do no other: he belonged to history, he was essentially a political animal. And since the death of his brother and cousin, if not before, he had persuaded himself that destiny called him to the headship of France.

Early next morning he set off, as the household generally believed, to go hunting at Hechingen. His mother may have suspected that some other design was on foot. As a talisman she gave him the ring which Napoleon had placed on her mother's finger. In the chill autumn twilight he picked up Parquin, who, of course, had gleefully thrown himself into the plot. The night of the 28th they slept at Strasbourg.

The following day was devoted to a conference of the conspirators and to drawing up manifestos. While reminding the French people that upon four separate occasions they had decreed by four million votes that the sovereignty resided in the Emperor Napoleon and his successors in the male line, he proposed to summon a national congress to decide on the form of government. He, the great Emperor's heir, embodied the principle of national sovereignty; the actual government of France was merely a dynastic variation from the Bourbon rule and the tool of the Holy Alliance. The army was invited to "drive the barbarians from the Capitol." "From the rock of St. Helena," concluded the pretender, "a ray of the dying sun has pierced my soul. I shall not let that holy fire die." To his mother he wrote two letters—one to be delivered in case of success, the other announcing his failure.

Sunday, October 30th, dawned. This evening, said the young man to himself, I shall be virtually Emperor of the French or—what? Not impossibly, a dead man. "You can imagine," he told his mother, "with what a thrill I heard the clock strike six." At that hour, wearing an artillery uniform which faintly suggested the appearance of the Emperor, he set off with Persigny, Parquin and half-a-dozen officers through the dark deserted streets of Strasbourg. It was a big business

to overthrow a monarchy, but he had no doubt that he was the rare kind of man that did such things. At the artillery barracks, meanwhile, the sleepy soldiers had been roused from their beds and drawn up on the parade. When Colonel Vaudrey ordered money to be distributed among them they must have realized that something very unusual was afoot. Beside their commander stood a strange young man, with a dark moustache and goatee, wearing a cloak over his uniform. Vaudrey harangued them on the ancient glories of the Empire and on the servile rôle to which France had too long been doomed. The moment of destiny had come. "Soldiers," he cried, "I present to you the nephew of the Emperor Napoleon." He embraced the strange officer. "Cry '*Vive l'Empereur!*'" And they all cried "*Vive l'Empereur*," except one recruit, who did not know what it was all about and cried "*Vive le Roi*," by force of habit, to be buffeted for his stupidity.

The regiment was then divided into five detachments, which went off to rouse the other regiments of the garrison, to arrest the general, and to take possession of the public offices. "It has begun to snow," whispered Louis, regarding this as an unfavourable omen, to Vaudrey. "It will be a fine enough day presently," returned the Colonel, cheerily. The eagle which was displayed above the standard as the insurgents proceeded through the streets was recognised and cheered by the people turning out for Mass. But being provincials and not Parisians, they attended to their devotions and left it to the military to settle the change of government. Persigny neatly collared the prefect and locked him up; but Parquin bungled his job, which was to seize General Voirol. Assisted in the scuffle by his wife and mother-in-law, the General got away, and rallying several members of his staff, hurried to the infantry barracks. There he found a confused struggle going on, argument here and there being emphasized with sword-play. The infantry from the first had shown no eagerness to

join the gunners. The cries of "*Vive l'Empereur*" were met with bewildered queries, "What Emperor?" "Who is this?" "What is it all about?" Then someone shouted, "Soldiers, you are being deceived. That man is not a Bonaparte, he is the nephew of Colonel Vaudrey!" Louis tried to mount a horse in order to show himself and rally his supporters. He knew he cut a fine figure in the saddle. But the day was lost. He was crowded against the wall by the horse and in that position arrested. "You see," said Voirol, "you have found only one traitor in the French army." "Rather," said Louis, "I have found at least one Labédoyère." They were marched off to prison, all except Persigny, who got away across the Rhine. "I'm sorry," said the Prince to Vaudrey. The Colonel sighed.

It was all over before the cathedral bells had begun to ring for High Mass. Mrs. Gordon, hearing that the Prince was taken, stayed to burn letters compromising various officers; taken while so occupied, she defied the victors and abused the passing troops for not having rallied to Napoleon's standard. No blood had been spilt and no honour lost. Louis in a letter to his mother regretted his failure but not his attempt, and entreated her to do her utmost for his partisans. They might all have been tried by court-martial, but they were claimed by the Public Prosecutor. Their leader was taken out of the citadel and confined in the town gaol. His supreme concern was for the men who had risked their lives for him. He wrote off to Odilon Barrot in Paris, to brief him for the defence of Vaudrey. "I alone arranged everything, I alone laid the plans," he protested. "The others were led away by me." Questioned officially, he said he would not have declared himself Emperor, but would have made an appeal to the people.

Perhaps he counted on making that appeal from the dock at Strasbourg. But before Hortense had time to throw herself at his feet, the sage Louis Philip had

decided otherwise. It would hardly do to place one Bonaparte on the top of the column for all Frenchmen to worship while that one's nephew was being prosecuted for proclaiming the same cult in another fashion. On November 9th Louis was called down into the prison office and bundled, protesting, into a post-chaise. There was to be no trial for him, he was told; the King had ordered him to be expelled the country. After a night spent in a Paris police cell, the Prince found himself locked up in the sea-girt citadel of Port Louis, on the coast of Brittany, till the wind should fall in with the plans of Louis Philip. He had time once more to write to his mother—now back at Arenenberg—again recommending the captives of Strasbourg to her kindness. His father from Florence surprisingly sent him his blessing—to that devout personage, perhaps, rebellion against the upstart King of the Barricades was a very different thing from rebellion against the Holy Father, especially as the Bonapartes stood to gain nothing from the latter. Probably the Prince's gaolers let him see the newspapers. The Press, which, not only in England, has a weakness for the winning side, almost unanimously condemned his attempt as absurd, preposterous, wicked, ill-advised, etc. These are clichés, stocked above every sub-editor's desk, to be used in the case of failures. The plan was not as badly conceived as many which have landed an adventurer upon a throne. The most apposite comment on the *échauffourée de Strasbourg* might be: they manage these things better in Paris.

Further—Persigny had proved a bad advance agent. But no word of reproach for any of his followers was ever heard from Louis Napoleon, who sailed on November 21st, 1836, on the frigate *Andromède* for the continent of America.

IV

Ninety years ago a ship at sea was still in most people's estimation a prison where you stood the chance of being drowned. Old Louis Philip had the virtues as well as the defects of the bourgeois—he was not cruel or bloody, and, motives of policy apart, had no wish to shed this troublesome young pretender's blood; still, he must have chuckled at the thought of the discomfort he was enduring on that deliberately protracted sea voyage. For the *Andromède* had sailed under sealed orders, not to be opened till she reached the line. Bonaparte junior must have recalled the last destination of his uncle, and reflected with relief that France possessed no St. Helena. The officers were friendly, but the weather was often unkind. When it was calm the exile leaned over the rail and remembered the smooth waters of the Bodensee. He mused on his ill-fortune, and wondered whether these things were pre-ordained and foreshadowed. (We all do at such times!) Once, he told his mother, when passing through a wood with Mathilde, he came upon a tree shattered by a storm, and it occurred to him that their dream of marriage might be likewise shattered; which, he added : "I suppose is now the case." (It was upon the failure of the Prince's last desperate venture Mathilde had been bidden to forget him, and her father, Jerome, was heard to declare he had never seriously entertained the idea of the marriage.) Never before, in his life of nearly twenty-nine years, had the Prince been separated for more than three or four weeks from his mother. A true Frenchman, he felt the separation from her and his homeland very keenly. In his letter dated January 1st, 1837, he writes, "I am fifteen hundred leagues from you in another hemisphere. Happily, thought traverses that space in less than half a second. I am near you; I assure you of my regret for all the tortures I have occa-

sioned you. I renew the expression of my tenderness and my gratitude. At 4.30 we were at table; allowing for the difference in longitude, it was seven o'clock at Arenenberg. Probably you were at dinner. In thought I drank to your health; perhaps you were drinking mine. At least it pleased me to think so. I thought, too, of my companions in misfortune. Alas, I am always thinking of them. They are more unfortunate than I, and that reflection makes me more unfortunate than they."

He knew now that he was bound for New York. Profoundly discouraged, he harboured the notion of settling in the New World, as his uncle Joseph had started to do. To Frenchmen in those days America still appeared as a more adventurous Arcadia, in which statesmen like Cincinnatus contended with the Noble Savage, and simple lovers like Paul and Virginia got in the way of both. After a call at Rio, where he was not allowed to land, and an unduly extended cruise of over four months, the heir of Napoleon set foot at Norfolk in Virginia on March 30th, 1837. At New York he was met by his valet, Thélin, sent by his mother to meet him, by his Italian friend Arese, and also by the Murats. His heart was rejoiced by the tidings that all his fellow-conspirators had been acquitted. If a full report of the trial reached him, he must have perceived that the Alsatian jury had been moved not so much by any Bonapartist sentiment as by commiseration for the mothers of the accused.

Before sailing the Prince had been presented by the sous-préfet with a viaticum of fifteen thousand francs (six hundred pounds) with the compliments of the King of the French, a sum, it has been suggested, substantially covered by the money which was found on him and his accomplices at the moment of their arrest. Further remittances having reached him from his mother, the young man was able to cut quite a considerable figure in the New York of those days. When he became an Emperor plenty of people claimed to having

known him at this stage of his career, and all testified to the correctness of his behaviour and the respectability of his acquaintances. One witness, a clergyman, reluctantly admits, however, that it was just possible His Highness might have penetrated into circles and quarters unknown to and undreamed of by the cloth. His melancholy, heavy manner qualified him for admission to that mysterious and distinguished body The Order of Ancient Owls, the insignia of which was believed to remain for many years in his possession. Only by his way of waking up in the society of ladies did the exile at all fulfil the Yankees' conception of a Frenchman. If they found him dull, he found them very provincial, or, as he put it, colonial. He was taken to see the water pouring over Niagara, expressed his admiration in suitable terms, and returned to New York, not noticeably exhilarated, but anxious for news. Uncle Joseph evidently disgusted with him, did not deign to acknowledge his letters. It is very unlikely that he would have stood America any longer or better than his uncle. If he had stayed on that side of the world, he would probably have found a more congenial milieu in a Spanish American state.

But his mind was made up for him by a letter received on June 3rd : indeed, before he opened the envelope, by the words ; *Venez, venez*," which he read upon the outside in the familiar writing of Dr. Conneau, his mother's medical attendant. The letter itself was from Hortense, informing him that she was about to undergo a serious operation. Nine days later the anxious son started for Europe. He reached London, via Liverpool, on July 10th, the thought of once more climbing the height at Arenenberg making his heart beat faster. The French and Austrian ambassadors placed difficulties in his path. They were overcome by means of that facile expedient, another person's passport. Louis made his way up the Rhine valley and was in time to find his mother alive. Dr. Conneau's urgency had not been

vain. On October 5th, 1837, Hortense Beauharnais, some time Queen of Holland, Duchess of St. Leu, died in her son's arms at the age of fifty-four. Perhaps at that moment she gave a thought to another son—her child by her old lover, the Comte de Flahault; perhaps, to some whispered recommendation and to a promise given between sobs, may be traced the loyal friendship which was to unite the half-brothers. "I have never harmed any one," gasped the dying woman. That was true. She strove now to recall her never very lively faith. "We shall meet again," she protested desperately. "Oh, never doubt it, Louis. That hope must be true, because it is so necessary to us all." And she went—to find out.

Her husband wrote a kind letter to their son from Florence. Louis wanted kindness and consolation badly just then. Very lonely he must have felt when the cortège set out from Arenenberg, bearing the beloved body to be laid beside Josephine's at Rueil—for the Powers did not refuse to Hortense dead the right of entry they had refused her living. Louis Philip, no doubt, was sorry she had died and so afforded her pestilent son an excuse for coming back to Europe. His spies reported that he was restoring the castle of Gottlieben, near to Arenenberg, as though he intended to settle there permanently; but they watched him closely, expecting him to be up to mischief.

They were not wrong. On her son's ambition Hortense had acted as a break. By her death, too, he was put in possession of very considerable funds. Persigny, Vaudrey, all the lucky mutineers, rallied round him in his bereavement and naturally tried to rouse him by dwelling upon his high destiny. Having come scatheless through the late flare-up, they were all willing and eager to have another shot at the bourgeois government. Perhaps because he was so quiet and self-contained, the young man, to a singular extent, inspired confidence in his followers. They saw, moreover, that he was grateful

and knew that he would remember them when he came into his kingdom. Come, they said, it is time to make another move. So the sweet uses of adversity and advertisement were combined. Lieut. Laity, one of the acquitted, with the Prince's approval and at his expense, published at the beginning of 1838 a little book giving a detailed account of the affair at Strasbourg and, of course, defending it. The verdict of the Alsatian jury had naturally exasperated the July government; and indeed, as Valérie Masuyer's sister remarked, it was scandalous that common soldiers should be shot or severely punished every other day for comparatively trivial breaches of discipline, while officers for having drawn their swords against the King and incited their men to open rebellion went unpunished. Upon Laity, therefore, who had unwisely remained in France, was spent the pent-up wrath of outraged authority. He was tried before the Chamber of Peers, and that body, unmoved by references to his mother and reckless of the feelings of his whole family circle, fined him ten thousand francs and sentenced him to five years' imprisonment.

This was hard upon the Lieutenant; but it brought the Bonapartist pretender once more into the limelight. When the mutineers had been originally placed on their trial, Louis Philip's ministers had been twitted with letting the prime offender go scot-free. They did not propose to lay themselves open to this charge a second time.

The Duc de Montebello (son of Lannes, one of Napoleon's favourite marshals), the French envoy to Switzerland, was instructed to present a strongly-worded note to the government at Berne, demanding the expulsion from Swiss territory of a pretender who unceasingly conspired against a friendly state. The federal government should have replied, as brave Holland did in 1920 to a similar demand, that Switzerland would afford the right of asylum to anyone she

pleased. Instead, the answer was returned that Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was believed to have acquired Swiss nationality. The note was referred by the Federal Diet to the canton of Thurgau. Perhaps because it was a long way from the French frontier, Thurgau affirmed that it numbered the Prince among its citizens and would neither expel him nor surrender him to any foreign Power. In face of this attitude the Diet returned an evasive answer to the ambassador and adjourned the debate.

The situation was awkward as well as dangerous for Louis. Obviously, if he claimed Swiss nationality he must relinquish all pretensions to a political rôle in France. He let it, then, be inferred that he had accepted the citizenship of Thurgau, as other public men accept the freedom of this or that city, as an honorary distinction, by no means implying the forfeiture of his birthrights. And as the French now assembled an army on the Swiss frontier and made it plain that they were going to have their way by force, he took the only course possible to a man of honour. "Switzerland," he wrote to the Landamman of Thurgau, "has done her duty as an independent state. I shall now do mine. I leave a country to which my presence is a source of danger. Never shall I forget the noble conduct of the cantons, which have pronounced so courageously in my favour."

So, gracefully and magnanimously, he renounced the country which had been his mother's asylum in her darkest hour and his home for the greater part of his infancy and youth. He went to London, accompanied by Persigny, Vaudrey and a dozen more permanent adherents. Louis Philip was confounded. Bonaparte is nearer Paris, now, sneered the opposition Press, than he was at Arenenberg. The *Morning Chronicle* asked if France would have dared to address such threats to a s ronger Power than Switzerland—to Great Britain, for instance? In that event, predicted the English journal,

Lord Palmerston's reply would be short and to the point.

The exile was a comparatively rich man. He took a fine house in Carlton Gardens and was immediately received into London society. It was discovered that though only a foreigner, he could ride straight, and that he neither jabbered nor gesticulated. Nobody disliked Napoleon any more, and everyone in London sneered at the Citizen King of the Barricades. The Prince did the things expected of distinguished foreigners, and manifested an interest, which was not altogether feigned, in industrial exhibitions before Albert of Saxe-Coburg had set the taste for them. He was made a member of the best clubs (though blackballed at the Coventry through the malice of the Comte de Jarnac) and dined with dukes. Therefore he met Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, M.P., then residing at Grosvenor Gate. Disraeli's recollections of the Prince at this stage of his career are most piquant. While visiting Bulwer Lytton, at his Thames-side cottage, the Bonaparte persuaded Benjamin and his wife to let him take them for a row; with the result that he got them aground on a mud-bank, from which they only got off by the help of some watermen. "You are too adventurous, sir," cried the affrighted Mrs. Disraeli. "You should not attempt things you are unable to accomplish," a reproach which must often have recurred in the Prince's memory in after years.

He was particularly friendly with Lady Blessington, now trying to make ends meet by writing rubbishy novels, and her companion, the Comte d'Orsay. He took part in the much-talked-of Eglinton tournament and shared in the ridicule that harmless pageant excited. He kept horses, rode to hounds, and had intrigues. This was very different from Arenenberg—very much livelier than the society he had mixed in at Rome and Florence—and he was a young man of thirty, no longer tied, as he had been so long, to his mother's apron-strings. It was not an atmosphere in which the stern Republican

virtues flourished; his grandfather, Beauharnais, in his later years, one thinks, would not have found himself at home at White's or Crockford's. In comparison with the whiskered dandies of Her Majesty's Guards, the Prince's fellow-officers at Thun would now have struck him as somewhat homespun. At Carlton Gardens it must have been difficult to realize he had once been proposed as landamman of a Swiss canton. In London the fine Beauharnais spirit deteriorated. His faith in Republican institutions had been a little shaken by his glance at America. In that country, he had written, society, originally concerned to find safeguards against authority, was now seeking safeguards against the tyranny of the crowd. At dinner-tables in Mayfair and St. James's he did not hear much good of the crowd either; but he heard much praise of authority.

Returning from Gore House or from Lord Eglinton's, he sat down in Carlton Gardens to write his *Idées Napoléoniennes*. Under such influences he found himself writing, "Far be it from me to discuss the respective merits of the Republican and Monarchical systems—an insoluble problem." No such doubts had troubled him eight years before, when he went out to fight the Pope's troops in the valleys of Umbria. Still, he persisted in presenting his uncle as the heir and the upholder of the Revolution. The Emperor had replaced the aristocracy of birth by a hierarchy of merit; the prosperity of the country had been his incessant preoccupation. This contention was sustained by a formidable array of facts. The Napoleonic idea had long since won the affection of the masses because in the masses sentiment precedes reason—the heart feels before the brain conceives. Honour was to France what religion was to Rome; without honour she could not live, and the July government, making its appeal only to the mean instincts of the bourgeoisie, had cared nothing for the honour of France. By a slip of the pen the Prince wrote, "the Emperor wanted the Press Law to be passed within his

lifetime, as he did not want the power left to his successors, who might abuse it"—surely, a warning against the hereditary system from which the author hoped so much! Skimming the pages, we note that "France does not march, she wanders"; that after a revolution the essential thing is not to make a constitution, but to frame a system based on popular principles and adaptable to circumstances (this must have been written with a prophetic eye on 1848); that the only firm basis of a dynasty is identity of interest with the people. Napoleon was credited with the dream of federating all Europe in a league of peace; and with upholding the rights of nationalities, a principle certainly dear to his nephew.

This manifesto was read fairly widely, and gave many people, including Bulwer Lytton, to whom the author presented a copy, a high opinion of the Prince's political capacity. It is regrettable that Lord Melbourne did not prescribe it as a text-book to a young Queen who had no ideas at all about her duties beyond a general resolve to be good. The little book had probably a larger public than the two papers, the *Capitole* and the *Commerce*, which the pretender was running in Paris on the money realized by the sale of Arenenberg. It was followed up by the *Lettres de Londres*, attributed to Persigny. Here a parallel was drawn between Louis Napoleon and the young Octavius in exile, lamenting the fate of his uncle. To be compared with some antique worthy still helped a man in the France of those days. The Prince's face recalls that of the great Emperor, lied the ex-warrant officer, unblushingly. His Highness was represented as a person of exemplary seriousness and industry, who, rising at some unearthly hour, consecrated a long day to meditation upon his uncle's virtues and to the study of the political situation. One wonders how he was able to put in so much time at Gore House, even more how he could spare the time to train for the tournament. In reality, I imagine, on most days the great business was

begun by the Prince and Persigny in dressing-gowns, running through the French newspapers, over their coffee; some desultory talk would follow, suggestions being thrown out and considered. If anyone was discovered to have a grievance or grounds for complaint against the French government, "You had better write and sound him," the Prince would say; then he would start the social round, returning, no doubt, to the great subject with his adherents when he found himself alone with them.

Of course, variety would be provided by alarums and excursions, by notes from Lord Melbourne or some one in his confidence that Louis Philip wanted the Prince to be moved on again—which under English law couldn't be done—by news of some outbreak in Paris, like that of Barbès, in May, 1839; by the coming and going of agents and visitors from France; by the obvious efforts of French government spies to find out what was going on inside the house in Carlton Gardens; signally, by the quarrel fastened on him by his cousin, Count Léon. This cousin was the son of the late Emperor by Eléonore Denuelle Delaplaigne, one of his few mistresses; a fine dashing sort of blade, who having got through the fairly comfortable fortune secured him by his father, had begun to make himself a nuisance to the rest of the Bonaparte family. At times, it must have seemed a little droll to Léon that instead of him or Walewski, who were unmistakably the great Napoleon's own sons, a prince, to whom a great many people denied any drop of Bonaparte blood at all, should be accepted as the Emperor's heir, particularly as the Empire was notoriously not the legitimate monarchy. Therefore he can hardly be blamed when, upon the door of Carlton Gardens being shut in his face, he taunted Louis Napoleon with being no Frenchman. The Prince, conscious that his attitude appeared ungenerous, sent Parquin with a letter to explain that his refusal to receive the Count was due to a compact entered into by all the members

of the family. Léon's reply took the form of a challenge delivered by Lieut.-Col. Ratcliffe of the 6th Dragoon Guards. When the parties confronted each other by the windmill on Wimbledon Common a hitch occurred. The Prince had chosen swords, which, as the challenged party, he had the right to do; the Count, who had already killed his man, maintained, however, that he was the aggrieved party and chose pistols. Louis was placed in a difficulty. To kill the Emperor's own son would have been to kill his pretensions to the leadership of the Bonaparte faction; on the other hand, he had no wish to be killed by the Count. Luckily the debate was interrupted by the police. All the parties were hauled off to Bow Street and bound over to keep the peace in substantial recognizances. The Prince at this juncture, as often before and afterwards, found a friend in Mr. Joshua Bates, of Baring Bros. Léon's recognizances were provided by Fenton, the keeper of the hotel in St. James's Street, where he was lodging. Having got through the little money with which he had been somewhat mysteriously supplied, he went back to France to become, in course of time, his cousin's fervent though unrecognized supporter.

There is no solid ground for believing this fire-eater to have been consciously in the service of Louis Philip, sent over in order to draw the pretender into a conflict with the English authorities; but hoping he might cause trouble, as he generally did, the French government may have supplied him with funds and facilitated his journey. For Louis Napoleon, as might have been foreseen, was more dangerous in London than he would have been in Switzerland. Guizot, the French ambassador, was, of course, aware of his intimate association with powerful people over here, notably with Baring Brothers. In the first half of the year 1840 the Orleanist spies reported that something was brewing at Carlton Gardens. The Citizen King, true to his indiscreet policy of keeping alive the Napoleonic cult, had sent the Prince

de Joinville with three frigates to bring the body of the Emperor back from St. Helena. Be prepared, wrote Guizot, for an attempt by the Prince to intercept the ship and to take off the body, or to follow it into the port of Havre. The latter plan would not have been a bad one—troops and people might have found a difficulty in acclaiming the ashes of the Emperor and thrusting back his nephew, the man who had the best right to follow the hearse.

Louis Napoleon felt, in fact, that the time had come to strike another blow. Or Persigny may have thought so; for that ambitious man aimed at being the right-hand man of an Emperor, not merely a hanger-on to a London man of fashion. He did not let the Prince forget that the years were going by, that he was now thirty-two, an age at which his uncle was already famous. And Louis Philip had been reigning ten years. To a superficial observer the Orleanist rule seemed to have proved a success. To judge by the prefects' reports, France was exceedingly prosperous, the population law-abiding and tranquil. But looking below the surface, others perceived this prosperity to be almost confined to the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie; men went about their individual affairs without caring twopence for the commonweal; and though they obeyed the law, they didn't respect it. "There is something rotten about this country," remarked Greville, by no means an idealist. France seemed sunk in a dreamless sleep. Certainly, great aspirations and generous endeavour were at a discount. Like another great country eighty-eight years later, France was a body without a soul.

Still . . . Arago, bitterly opposed by Thiers, was clamouring for social reform. Eight millions of Frenchmen of full age would not indefinitely submit to be represented by an electorate of two hundred thousand. While the tomb under the dome of the Invalides was being got ready for the Emperor's reception the actual rulers of France, signing the Treaty of London, admitted

the undoing of their Egyptian policy by Britain, Russia and Austria. As Louis Napoleon stepped out of Gore House into the August night, in company with Lord Nugent, Poodle Byng and Mr. Planché, he looked hard at them and threw over his shoulder an invitation to dine with him at the Tuileries that day twelvemonth.

V

These successive pronunciamentos of Louis Napoleon strike one as singularly boyish. To load a ship with jolly good fellows (not forgetting an ample stock of liquor for their entertainment), to land at peep of day upon the shores of the coveted kingdom, and to march into town, shouting, "Here we are, good people! Rally round us and drive out the usurper!"—that is very much the way the thing would be done by a lad of fourteen or younger. But the mind of boyhood is logical and practical—if you want anything, you usually get it sooner by going and taking it than by waiting for somebody else to bring it to you. And "the Other's nephew," a ssome one derisively called him, knew he might have to wait a long time for anybody to fetch him the crown.

After his previous failure, it seems surprising that he should find fifty-six adherents ready to risk their fortune, and not improbably their lives, in just such another venture—among these, too, men like Persigny and Parquin, who had already tasted the bitterness of defeat. It was the Prince's calm manner which inspired confidence. Proposals the most fantastic and extravagant sounded sure and plausible when expounded so quietly and deliberately. Everything was arranged for—you had only to obey. And the great majority of the fifty-six, including Montholon, who was already in his fifties, were content to remain in ignorance of the details and

to embark for an unknown destination at the Prince's bidding.

Not impossibly, a good many holiday-making cockneys aboard the Margate hoy—perhaps the Tuggs's on their way to Ramsgate—that hot August day in 1840, may have noticed the *Edinburgh Castle* as she dropped down the London river and have eyed her with the curiosity steamers continued at that day to excite. Had they guessed she carried the would-be Cæsar and all his fortunes, no doubt they would have cheered; for the July government was enormously unpopular just then in Britain, and war with France was quite on the cards. But, Louis Napoleon had kept his counsel well. The boat had been hired in the name of a Mr. Rupello for a pleasure trip, and the company had been embarked in detachments at Greenwich, Gravesend, Blackwall and Margate. There were arms on board, and French uniforms on which Dr. Conneau had sewn the buttons, and with him the Prince took four hundred thousand francs (sixteen thousand pounds) in bank notes and specie. Chained to the deck was also the famous eagle, which someone had had the happy or unhappy thought of buying from a sailor on the waterside at Blackwall.

The details of such attempts as this are worth studying, since by them the course of history has often been and may again be decided. However unpleasing the reflection may be to the philosopher, the fate of nations is much at the mercy of such accidents as determine the issue of a prize-fight. In the early morning of August 6th, the *Edinburgh Castle* stopped her engines off the village of Wimereux, then and for many years after a mere row of cabins and cottages. Anxiously awaiting them on the long level sands was a Lieutenant Aladenize, of the 42nd regiment of artillery, who had come from St. Omer, where the bulk of his regiment was stationed. Wearing the same uniform, the Prince and his adherents pulled in boats to the shore. Early though the hour was, they were espied by two or three customs

officers and immediately challenged. "Here is the Prince Louis Napoleon," it was explained. 'The July government was done for, and all the officers had to do was to join the expedition and cheer for the Prince. But the douaniers held back—they were the King's men. The adventurers, crowding round, threatened and hustled. The Prince intervened. The men were not to be harmed. He let them go upon their promise to tell no one what they had seen. A little dangerous this forbearance must have seemed to such men as Parquin—the fate of empires is seldom decided without the shedding of blood. However, Boulogne, the goal of the expedition was not far away, and in military order they set off across the downs. The town was garrisoned by only two companies of the 42nd, and these Aladenize expected to win over. Through the shuttered streets they marched into the lower town. Outside the old church of St. Nicholas they were challenged by a sentry. Aladenize parleyed with the sergeant in charge of the guard. To no purpose. The men had heard of Strasbourg; they regarded the Prince doubtfully; they refused to take orders from any but their own company-commander. The sentry clung stubbornly to his musket when the Lieutenant tried to take it from him. A few passers-by, attracted by the scuffle, crowded round, and learning what was afoot, cheered feebly for the Prince. But he turned away. He could not find it in his heart to assault these soldiers—to give an order which might lay a man dead at his feet. But to summon a post to surrender and upon its refusal to turn away with a shrug of the shoulders and a "We will try elsewhere," is not to impress wavering onlookers with a sense of your power or even seriousness. Louis Napoleon should have forced that guard and disarmed it—among the bystanders there would have been those to shoulder the captured muskets. Accepting the rebuff instead, the little band crossed the river and appeared before the barracks in Capécure. Thanks to Aladenize, they had

no difficulty in entering. The Lieutenant ordered the two companies to parade, presented the Prince, and called for cheers. Louis Napoleon shook hands with the N.C.O's and promoted some of them on the spot. It was Strasbourg all over again. The men were naturally disposed to obey one of their own officers, and were perhaps a little awed in the presence of a nephew of the Great Man. Then in rushed the Captain, Col-Puygellier. Drawing his sword, he called the Prince a traitor and commanded his men to expel him from the barracks. As before, Louis resorted to argument. "There will be butchery if you continue to resist," growled one of his stouter-hearted followers. "All right—begin with me," retorted the Captain. So the Prince fired a pistol, hoping it wouldn't hurt anybody, but by accident it grazed a private's cheek. He and his men were shoved out of the barracks and the gates closed upon them. If any further proof were wanted of the fascination Louis Napoleon exercised over his friends, it is to be found in their continuing to follow him after these convincing demonstrations of his constitutional inability to do a deed of violence. There is an old castle in the High Town, and thither these possibly despairing but certainly not desperate fellows now proceeded to see what more could be done by kindness. At the top of the Grande Rue they were met by a gentleman who had evidently just got out of bed. It was the sous-préfet, and he barred their path. But the Prince's blood was up, and his men resorted to such violence that the official had to withdraw with his hands positively scratched. They looked at the Porte des Dunes and found the door barred. An Englishman, with that unhealthy devotion to authority which is our besetting weakness, had taken it upon himself to get it shut. Distinctly disheartened, the rebels marched off to have a look at the Column of the Grand Army. By this time Col-Puygellier had collected his troops and given the alarm. The Bonapartists presently saw a large force of gendarmerie, soldiers and

national guards approaching. Louis Napoleon declared he would die at the foot of the Column (which, it is significant, commemorates his uncle's most signal failure), but thinking better of it, made a bolt for the coast. The skipper of the *Edinburgh Castle*, who always maintained that he was not privy to the plot, had received orders to stand by. Now he beheld his late passengers crowding down to the shore, making frantic appeals to him to take them off. He launched his boats—the Prince and several others, not waiting for these, flung themselves into the water and swam towards the steamer. But the hunt was up. The pursuers came down to the water's edge and fired at the defenceless men while a port official boarded the steamer and put the master under arrest. One man was shot as he rose out of the water, another was drowned. The government supporters did not share Louis Napoleon's aversion from killing. He himself and the rest of his followers were hauled out of the water and hurried, with dripping garments and chattering teeth, to the castle they had hoped to enter as victors.

No one can say that more desperate measures would have succeeded at Boulogne or Strasbourg; but for a filibuster, Louis Napoleon seems to have relied singularly little on force and overmuch on persuasion. The waverers whom he encountered saw that whatever might be feared from authority, nothing in either event was to be feared from the rebels. The ordinary man, when that is the position, will always prefer to look on. A good many of the defeated Bonapartists, when the cell door closed upon them, no doubt cursed their chief's tenderness of heart and recalled the saying that you can't make omelettes without breaking eggs. Tenderness of heart, it really was—a tenderness that had manifested itself in childhood—that made the Prince in after years turn his eyes away from a bull-fight, that was indeed to influence the course of history at Villafranca and Sedan; but it was a noble weakness

which his native caution on this occasion, at least, sanctioned. On second thoughts, his followers without exception must have congratulated themselves on their leader's refusal to shed blood—they could not, at any rate, be arraigned as murderers.

No doubt the Citizen King regretted that, though nobody gave the unsuccessful pretender any credit for his scruples. The Press was by turns severe and funny at the expense of this Jack-in-the-Box who was continually popping up to disturb the peace of France; the people were more amused than sympathetic. Notwithstanding, the government would take no further chances where a Bonaparte was concerned, with a jury, but announced that the ringleader and twenty of his accomplices were to be tried before the House of Lords. "The Peers!" exclaimed the legitimist *Gazette de France*, and the accused's own paper, *Le Capitole*, "the Peers—half of whom are the great Napoleon's own creation and how many of whom have sworn and forsworn allegiance to three successive dynasties!" So much the better for the accused, the ministry might fairly have argued. However, out of 312 peers, no fewer than 160 abstained from taking part in the proceedings. The abstainers included Soult and all Napoleon's surviving marshals, except Oudinot; and two others more interesting—the Comte de Flahault, Hortense's lover, and Admiral Ver-Huell, that naturalized Dutchman, whom some people still like to think of as Louis Napoleon's father.

His real father, the ex-King of Holland, had written from Florence to the Press, imploring mercy for his misguided son—the dupe of evil flatterers and designing men. The appeal did not seem superfluous. The defeated adventurer lay awaiting trial in the Conciergerie, in the cell formerly tenanted by the assassin, Fieschi, in the prison, as he must have remembered, from which his grandfather, Beauharnais, had penned his dying adjuration to his children to be true to the Republic.

But it was not a Republican that he called in for his defence. Instead, he chose Berryer, that stalwart legitimist, and, incidentally, the ablest advocate in Europe.

The trial began at the Luxembourg on September 28th, 1840. In the dock, beside or behind the Prince, sat Persigny, Montholon, Parquin, Dr. Conneau, Lieut. Aladenize and Surgeon Lombard, with the others selected for trial. A large proportion of the filibusters had been dismissed after a preliminary enquiry, as mere servants or underlings who had obeyed their masters' orders without appreciating their significance. Aladenize probably was the only one of the accused who thought himself in any danger of death. Louis Napoleon in that hour was great. "For the very first time," he said, "I am allowed to lift my voice in France and speak freely to Frenchmen." He did not waste that opportunity. Clearly and definitely he stated his position. The plebiscite which had in no uncertain voice conferred the sovereignty upon Napoleon and his heirs had never been revoked by another appeal to the French nation. Everything, then, that had since been done was illegal—the restoration of the Bourbons by foreign bayonets, the transfer of authority to the House of Orleans by a few deputies chosen by some hundred thousand citizens. He embodied a principle, which was national sovereignty; a cause, which was the Empire; a defeat, which was Waterloo. Those beside him in the dock were not his accomplices; he alone was responsible for what had been done at Boulogne; he had kept his followers in ignorance of his projects. The competence of the tribunal he refused to recognize. "If you are the servants of the victor, I need expect no justice; and I don't want your generosity." He sat down. Louis Napoleon had risen to the height of the occasion.

Berryer, the royalist, must have enjoyed this challenge to a regime which claimed to represent the people's will. The Citizen King, who had denounced as a monster the great man he now delighted to honour—the

time-serving peers—these were not spared! With eyes fixed on the quaking judges, he thundered, "If there is one among you that can swear, his hand upon his heart, 'If the accused had succeeded in his attempt, still I would have condemned and disavowed the principle on which he takes his stand'—that man and him alone, will we accept as judge!"

This was dangerous stuff, and when Persigny for his defence outlined even more clearly than his chief the Bonapartist position, he was interrupted and told to sit down. The prosecutors were on safer ground when they exposed the machinations by which the attempt had been prepared and by which the Prince had tried to seduce the military. The descent upon Boulogne had been no frolic of a hare-brained adventurer, no mere gesture, but a plot elaborately planned and skilfully conceived. Evidently the pretender had first aimed at winning over the garrison of Lille. For that purpose he had used as his agents, first Surgeon Lombard, then Mésonan, one of those disaffected officers to whom he had written expressing sympathy. General Magnan, commanding the garrison, appeared in the witness-box, and testified how Mésonan had made proposals to him across the dinner-table—proposals accompanied with bribes, which the general had rejected with indignation and disdain. "Go and hang yourself somewhere else"—with some such expression he had dismissed the emissary, instead of arresting him. Mésonan, fearing perhaps that hanging or something like it might indeed be his fate, denied the general's statements from the dock. The probability is that he had found some promises of support elsewhere in the North, for the adventurers appear to have been cruelly disappointed to find only Aladenize and a handful of others awaiting them at Wimereux.

Yet, strange to say, Aladenize, whose technical guilt was the gravest, got off with a sentence of perpetual exile. Mésonan was sentenced to fifteen years' imprison-

ment in a fortress, Conneau to five. Persigny, Montholon, Parquin, and Lombard were allotted terms of twenty years. Prince Louis Napoleon was sentenced to imprisonment for life in a fortress in the continental dominions of France.

The doom was pronounced on October 6th, while the tomb at the Invalides was being got ready to receive his uncle's body. The judges must have looked at each other and smiled. The troublesome fellow will be kept out of mischief till the next revolution, must have been the unspoken thought of each. Exchanging jokes about the meaning of perpetuity in post-revolutionary France, the condemned men parted; but one at least the Prince was never to see again—Parquin, he who had first encouraged in the Emperor's nephew a taste for warlike adventure, died a captive in the citadel of Doullens in 1845.

VI

The place selected for Louis Napoleon's prison was the fortress of Ham, built by the Constable of St. Pol in the year 1460. Already it had been used as a prison for Polignac and other ministers of the deposed King Charles X. The Prince had been taken there upon his capture at Boulogne, and knew therefore what to expect —knew, at least, that the prospect from the walls was as bleak and cheerless as that on which Mary gazed from the windows of Fotheringhay. However gallantly he had borne himself at the trial with the eyes of France upon him, he must have realized as the gates of Ham closed behind him, the day after his conviction, that he was a prisoner in prison, a helpless thing at the mercy of his gaolers. The French had failed to rally to his standard; unmoved, they heard of his condemnation. It was a great thing to be Napoleon's heir; but that great man himself had died a captive.

Says Stevenson: "It is all very well to talk of the alleviations of captivity, but the only favour for which the imprisoned man will thank you is to open the door." Still, this prisoner, it may be supposed, was glad to find that his captivity was to be shared by his old friend, Doctor Conneau and by General Montholon, who thus found himself at a second St. Helena; and that his faithful Thélin, though a free man, was permitted to continue as his valet. The Prince grumbled a little at his accommodation—his two rooms were damp and draughty, the plumbing was defective; in short, he had been vastly more comfortable at Carlton Gardens. But it was soon evident that the government did not wish to make things too hard for him. For the three men's table, twenty francs (about sixteen shillings) a day was allotted—an ample allowance in that time and country. They could ride in the courtyard and walk on the ramparts, though always within sight of a warder. A small plot of ground blossomed under the Prince's care into a garden, and he would occasionally throw nosegays to passers-by, who saluted him curiously and respectfully. In the evenings they all played whist with the Governor. Thélin brought back news, and, not improbably, letters, every day from the little town.

Such a situation was tolerable, and as Louis Napoleon at once perceived, not without its advantages and opportunities. His great fear was that he might be forgotten. Yet, after all, his uncle had become more a hero on his Rock than on his throne, at least more an object of sympathy. Wiser than the Emperor, the Prince did not propose to spend his time quarrelling with his gaoler or advertising his grievances. He had once complained that he was badly educated; so he began straightway to cultivate his mind. To Lady Blessington he wrote: "My life passes monotonously enough, but I can't say I am bored, for I have created for myself occupations which interest me." His years of captivity were spent, he afterwards said, at the

University of Ham. A savant's is indeed the best rôle an offender can assume. Learning ignores a man's moral, political or social behaviour. A paper establishing the existence of the fourth dimension would be read by scientific societies (at least, outside the United States) though it emanated from a man to be hanged next day for cannibalism and incest. It soon became known that Napoleon's nephew was preparing a work on Charlemagne. It never appeared. Meanwhile, his old friends, Mme. Cornu and Vieillard, were charged to ransack the libraries of Europe for manuscripts, and cartloads of books were unloaded at the fortress. The prison soon housed a respectable library. From history the Prince turned his attention to science. He wrote learnedly about sugar and he experimented with percussion caps in the whitewashed corridors. His experiments interested a local chemist, M. Acar, who became a frequent visitor and warm adherent. The distinguished captive's papers were accepted by the academies.

The authority which he had tried to subvert looked on with a benevolent eye. His correspondence, if not uncensored, was practically not interfered with, and he could receive as many visitors as he liked. Robert Peel, son of the great statesman, was among his callers, and Wikoff, an American, who strove to arouse pity for him as a pale wan wistful captive. It does not appear that Lady Blessington went to see him. Morny, his half-brother, waited for a more auspicious moment to make his acquaintance. In April 1843 the Prince was so far reconciled with his lot as to write, "If to-morrow they opened the doors of my prison and offered me exile instead, I should reject such a proposal, which would be in my eyes an aggravation of my punishment. I would rather be a captive on French soil than a free man anywhere else."

One would like to think that love had endeared his prison to him, as the love of Lucia Vendagoli sweetened the captivity of Frederick II's son. For the most fre-

quent of his visitors was a pretty country girl named Alexandrine, surnamed after her father's trade, *la belle sabotière*. She had two children, whom in after years he practically acknowledged; and he got rid of her ultimately by marrying her to his foster-brother, Bure. Certainly, Louis Napoleon would not so patiently have supported a celibate existence; but ambition is the antidote of love, and he was far too busy then, as afterwards, weaving plans for his own aggrandisement to think of his mistress as anything but a necessary distraction.

He had embarked on a discreet propaganda. Articles from his pen, but not over his own name, appeared from time to time in the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais* and other provincial papers. Possibly they were smuggled out of the fortress by Thélin or Alexandrine. Among these contributions was one which the author would have done better not to have reprinted. It was, in fact, a defence of slavery, as an institution essential to the prosperity and existence of the Southern States; not only, too, of slavery, but of the slave trade, which, he thought, it would be better to recognize and regulate than to attempt to suppress; the argument being, of course, the familiar one that it is safer to legitimate an evil than to aggravate it by driving it underground. How the sea-borne traffic in black flesh might have been humanized and regulated I do not know; but the Prince's tract may be searched in vain for any suggestions as to the regulation of slave-catching in Africa without which the commerce could not be sustained. The article winds up with an insinuation that Britain, on the pretext of suppressing the trade, was only seeking to embroil France; so the writer's real aim may have been to demonstrate his patriotic zeal and to prove himself a shrewd enemy of the ever-perfidious Albion.

In his *Fragments historiques*, written in prison, he reveals himself as a sounder patriot and a severe critic of the existing regime. His parallel between the Stuarts

and the House of Orleans is unduly strained, as might be expected in a political tract. The likeness between our Charles II and Louis Philip is not striking; yet the inglorious end of both their dynasties justifies the aphorism: "Among free peoples there has never been a government sufficiently strong to stifle liberty at home without winning glory abroad." On that dictum, the Emperor in after years must have pondered much.

From the history of England he deduced this lesson for kings—"March in the forefront of the ideas of your age; those ideas will follow and sustain you; march behind them, and they will drag you along; oppose them, and they will overthrow you." It is a pity that Napoleon III forgot this lesson; but it has not been much taken to heart by other kings, who seem to cling to obsolete creeds, canons, and conventions, and who, by their passion for killing animals, persistently flout the humane spirit of the age.

Theories of governments, so little discussed among Anglo-Saxon peoples, had always been well understood by Louis Napoleon. Though in many of its details he preferred the English system of procedure, he insisted that ministers should always and only be chosen outside parliament. In other words, he believed in a complete separation of the executive and the legislature. In this view he would have been supported by the majority of the doctrinaire Republicans of his time. He criticized the military organization of France and proclaimed the excellence of the Prussian system. About religion he never could think long or deeply. Evidently he regarded the Church chiefly as a moderating and steadying influence upon the masses. "What is needed is a University less atheistic and a clergy less ultramontane."

Every Prince must necessarily have some opinions on methods of government—opinions usually inspired by personal interest. Louis Napoleon, therefore, is better worth listening to when he lets his heart speak—the heart which made him give his coat to the beggar

in his Augsburg days. In his treatise on sugar culture he avows himself a Protectionist because "the first interest of a state does not consist in the cheapness of commodities, but in the welfare of the workers." He points to the wretchedness of the English working-class as a proof of the evils of free-trade. Finally, in his pamphlet, *The Extinction of Pauperism*, he comes forth as a Socialist. He pronounces for state aid: "It is in the budget that we must seek for the foundation of every system aiming at the betterment of the workers' conditions. To seek it elsewhere is a chimera." As an immediate remedy for unemployment he proposes the appropriation of all unoccupied land by the state and the establishment of agricultural colonies. It is not a very good plan, and he never attempted it when he had the opportunity; but it does prove, even more than his other political treatises, his genuine solicitude for the poor and his firm belief that the sole object of government is the happiness of the governed. "To command that one may do good or to obey whom one loves," he wrote at another time, "therein lies the true happiness of man."

At a time when so-called Liberal statesmen, like Thiers, were loudly declaring that it was not the business of the state to do anything for the worker, many eyes were turned gratefully towards the prisoner of Ham. The very printers who set up his articles sent to thank him. George Sand wrote a letter of congratulation. Genuine lovers of their kind, like Louis Blanc, wondered whether, after all, this nephew of an Emperor might not be a good Republican. Louis Blanc paid him a visit—so easy-going or contemptuous was the July government that it put no hindrance in the way of a conference between these representatives of two opposition parties. Oddly enough, on the question of universal (by which, of course, both meant manhood) suffrage, the Prince was more democratic and orthodox than the Republican. If you give the vote to everybody, said Blanc, you confide the destinies of the country to

ignorant peasants and reactionary farmers, who will vote as directed by their curé (which may be no worse than being directed by one's newspaper). On another point the Prince was easily worsted. To maintain that the monarchy was hereditary and at the same time based on the national will was in effect to maintain that the sovereign people was not to be allowed ever to change its mind. Regarding the captive kindly and, on the whole, approvingly, the publicist urged him to renounce all interest in the shadowy imperial heritage and to come forward as a true Republican. But Louis Blanc went home sorrowful; for the Prince would not renounce what was at once his title to consideration and his mission on earth.

Other Republicans had recognized the value of his name to their party, and invited him to found newspapers or to acquire an interest in existing ones, with themselves, of course, as editors. Louis Napoleon found he had no longer enough money for such costly ventures. Unlike the great majority of regal pretenders, he had seriously impoverished himself by pensioning and indemnifying those who had suffered by devotion to his cause. Want of money may indeed have helped to reconcile him to prison life, which has the merit of being economical; now he began to complain that it was only want of money that prevented him escaping. Napoleon confessed that he found Elba small; Louis Napoleon looking dolefully around, discovered in the fourth year of his captivity that the University of Ham was but a cage. His visitors were becoming rarer. To one of them, Lord Malmesbury, he complained; and Lord Malmesbury on his return to London talked about him to Slingsby Duncombe, one of those fast-disappearing English Radicals who were always ready to take up the cudgels on behalf of anyone "agin' the government." Duncombe's sympathies were so catholic as to extend to the blackguard Charles Duke of Brunswick, for no better reason, apparently, than that this Prince, having

been expelled by his own subjects, was properly refused redress by the German Diet and the Powers. It seemed to the English Radical (who afterwards exerted himself on behalf of the Chartists and the Hungarian patriots) that the two Princes, being brethren in misfortune, ought to help each other. By another account the idea originated with a young Florentine, Count Orsi, who had been drawn into the Boulogne affair through the connexion of his family as bankers with the Prince's father, and who had been released in the early part of 1845 from the citadel of Doullens. At any rate, when Orsi waited upon his chief at Ham, in the following June, it was in the company of Duncombe's right-hand man, Mr. G. T. Smith—a person, we are told, who had had much to do with horses, and who, like so many other persons connected with horses, despite an imperfect education, was possessed of very considerable native wit. These oddly assorted envoys returned to London with the draft of a singular treaty. The Prince and the Duke engaged themselves to assist each other, the former to put France in possession of her natural sovereignty, the latter to resume possession of his duchy, and if he should be able, to unite Germany into a single nation under a constitution in accordance with the liberal spirit of the age. This last clause was, obviously, Louis Napoleon's inspiration. It was certainly unexpected by Duke Charles, who cared nothing for the national aspirations of his countrymen. Accordingly, he erased it, carelessly substituting in the original draft a phrase which reads: "to take possession of the imperial union of Germany."* This alteration, or the reluctance of the Duke to provide the ready cash which his prospective ally wanted, occasioned a delay of nearly six months; for it was not till December that the treaty was signed, and then in the original form. The likelihood of the

* This is how I read the interpolation shown in the facsimile of the draft, published by Mr. Simpson, and I think by him alone, in his valuable work "The Rise of Louis Napoleon."

Duke ever being in a position to consolidate the German nation no doubt reconciled him to the stipulation about a Liberal constitution. The treaty, written on satin, was passed to the Prince by Orsi as they shook hands on meeting, and returned by the Prince, signed, in the same manner when they parted. And as the price of his promised support, six thousand pounds was placed to his credit with Baring Brothers by the optimistic Duke.

The world outside now took on rosier colours for the prisoner. The prospect of exchanging a dungeon for a hotel in St. James's seemed no longer positively disagreeable. Most of his old friends were now "out." Conneau's term had expired, and he remained at Ham only at his own request. The Prince believed that opportunities for escape were offered him, but he refrained through fear of being recaptured in disguise and held up to ridicule. Aristocratic friends in England made representations to Louis Philip; so did deputies in the Chamber. The answer, in substance, was that Louis Napoleon would be released on asking pardon and making a promise of good behaviour. Just then, opportunely, old Father Louis fell ill at Florence. Though he had given his son while at Ham good reason to complain of his indifference, he now sent an envoy to the King of the French, asking that he might be allowed to see him. The Prince added his filial entreaties, worded very respectfully. But Louis Philip was not to be moved. The captive must sign a letter which amounted to an acknowledgment of his fault and a promise to be good in future.

The Prince among his miscellaneous studies had produced a project for a Central American canal, by way of Nicaragua. To this the grateful citizens of that vivacious republic had responded by an invitation to him to come among them and direct the enterprise. Very well, he now offered to betake himself to America. The Citizen King shook his pear-shaped head—that troublesome young man had found his way back from

that continent before. The Prince's chivalrous offer to reconstitute himself a prisoner, if only he were allowed to pay a visit to his father, was equally declined, to the generally-expressed disgust of a nation fond of chivalrous gestures.

On May 25th, 1846, therefore, Louis Napoleon walked out of the fortress. He walked out dressed as a carpenter, smoking a pipe and covering his face as best he could with a plank held across his shoulder. There was work going on in the prison, and Thélin, the valet, had invited the workmen to have a drink with him; a proposal, it need hardly be said, which was eagerly accepted. More: the clever servant ran ahead of his master and engaged the attention of the gatekeeper by showing off the antics of a dog. Two other carpenters passed the man with the plank and said "There's Berton." The sentry looked at him, then at the men playing with the dog, and let him pass. The Prince was outside the prison—how one wishes that *la belle sabotière* had had some share in his escape! At a wayside cross he fell on his knees and thanked God. Presently he picked up a carriage and was joined by Thélin. They skirted towns, as the fugitive had skirted towns in Tuscany, and got to Valenciennes. They waited at the railway station (the first time that one hears of Louis Napoleon travelling by rail) for the train to Brussels. A porter recognized the valet and talked to him. Two hours later the train came in, and within half an hour they were across the border. The next evening but one, as Lord Malmesbury was riding down St. James's Street, a man came across the road and addressed him. It was Prince Louis Napoleon, who had just taken rooms at the Brunswick Hotel in Jermyn Street.

For his success he had largely to thank Conneau. The governor was required to see the prisoner four times a day. The doctor put him off repeatedly by saying the Prince was ill and had taken a frightful dose of castor oil. He must be by no means disturbed. In spite of the

unpleasant odours which the physician had managed to manufacture and to diffuse through the room in support of his explanation, the governor grew suspicious, and at last penetrated to the Prince's chamber. There was a figure in bed. He touched it and found it was a dummy.

Conneau was applauded throughout France and sentenced to a few months' imprisonment. Old Montholon proved he was in no way privy to the plot, and was presently released. Only Alexandrine was left at Ham to mourn the Prince and to wonder what she would do with his children. They eventually became the Comte d'Orx and the Comte de Labenne.

VII

A man's first impulse upon being released from a long imprisonment is (one supposes) to stretch his limbs and to take things for a time quite easily. The refugee Prince received an immediate and a hearty welcome from his English friends. Finding himself the centre of a cheerful circle at Bulwer Lytton's riverside cottage, he found it hard to realize that only eight days before he had been patrolling the dreary ramparts of Ham, discussing with Conneau the practicability of an escape. When his remote kinswoman, Lady Douglas (a descendant of the elder Beauharnais branch), said to him, "So here you are, free again? I hope you have abandoned once for all those illusions which have cost you and your friends so much suffering," he answered, "My cousin, I do not belong to myself. I belong to my name and to my country. It is no reason, because fortune has betrayed me twice, that my destiny is incapable of accomplishment. I await it." He was, in fact, content to wait for it. He wrote at once to the French ambassador and to the heads of the British government, assuring them that he meditated no further political adventures,

and that he had broken prison solely in order to discharge a son's duty to his dying father.

But he displayed no great eagerness to discharge that duty. True, he was refused passports by the interested Powers to make the journey to Italy; but one thinks he might have overcome that barrier as he had done on previous occasions. His father died at Livorno on July 25th, 1846. The Prince should have been touched by the concluding paragraph of the ex-King's will, which made up for much of the coldness he had displayed in the past, and, incidentally, in the minds of most people, should set at rest the absurd doubts expressed as to the son's paternity: "I leave the residue of my property, my palace at Florence, my estate of Civita Nova, my furniture, real estate, shares, etc., to my heir general, Louis Napoleon, my only surviving son; and as a special testimony of affection, I bequeath to him my collection of objects which formerly belonged to my brother, the Emperor Napoleon."

Joseph Bonaparte had died, two years before, in 1844; so, Lucien and his children having been disinherited by the Emperor, Louis's son stood forward now as beyond all question the Emperor's heir. Perhaps His Highness of Brunswick derived some encouragement from this; certainly long conferences took place between him and the Prince, who was seen driving his smart tilbury, attended by his tiny "tiger," over to Brunswick House every other day. Soon, however, the Prince, feeling that his health had suffered from his confinement, went for a long holiday to Bath. A year went by, and he was still waiting for the call of destiny. His reverses had depressed him, and he had lost his daring. When, after negotiations extending over fifteen months, his father was buried at St. Leu, he wrote a letter of thanks to the officer who had commanded the funeral escort and spoke of himself as being parted, probably for ever, from the men he loved best and the objects he held most dear.

London was like to prove his Capua. In the late forties,

despite the sobering influence of the Queen's German consort, gentlemen of birth went the pace, and Louis Napoleon did not lag behind. He indulged the fashionable passions for gambling and horseflesh. The proprietor of Crockford's had to refund two thousand pounds of which he had been swindled at that establishment, and on this act of honesty based a claim for consideration in the Prince's golden days. And it was known that Louis Napoleon kept a mistress.

She lived first at 277 Oxford Street, later in Berkeley Street, and she passed as Miss Howard. Preston, near Brighton, was her birthplace, as appears from her baptismal certificate, wherein the date of her birth is given as 1822, her names as Elizabeth Ann Herriott, her father's name and profession, Henry Herriott, brewer. Her grandfather is said to have owned or managed the Castle Hotel, at Brighton, and her father to have been, in sober fact, a waiter. Therefore, it seems not unlikely that she served behind the bar before she attracted the notice of the Town. There may have been a Mr. Howard; there certainly was a Major Martin, who again may have been the father of her son, Martin, born in 1842. To complete the lady's *état civil*, let it be stated that she was created Comtesse de Beauregard at the beginning of the Second Empire, that in 1859 she was married at Florence to Mr. Clarence Trewlawney, and that she died in 1865.

D'Orsay, it is said, first brought Louis Napoleon to her house. Then or very soon after she must have heard of Lola Montez and how she had bewitched the King of Bavaria. The day, then, of the great royal mistresses—the Pompadours and du Barrys—who disposed of kingdoms and made history was not yet over. A potential King or Emperor of France in the eyes of an ambitious courtesan might well seem as good a prize as a subordinate German Sovereign. This little sallow sleepy-eyed silent man, who was nephew of the great Napoleon, could open to her a vista very different from that to be

enjoyed as the kept woman of an English peer. Instead of ending up as the keeper of a private hotel in Pall Mall or being married off, on the quiet, to one of her highborn lover's servants, she might finish as a duchess or . . . . Well, of course, Princes did not usually marry their mistresses, but Louis was not a real Prince as yet. No doubt Miss Howard found it quite possible to like him. For his sake, so the story goes, she dismissed a very different suitor, who afterwards wrote a history of the Crimean War and enlivened that work with attacks upon his successful rival as spirited as the Charge of the Light Brigade.

Elizabeth Herriott was one of the two women whom Louis Napoleon in manhood came near to loving. His interest in her, in the first instance, was mainly animal; but in his kindly nature passion often begot affection. Indeed, he might have loved her or another, but for his master passion. Her face, cut like an antique cameo, was her fortune. Brains she may have had, but she obtained no reputation as a wit, and her education was little better than what any hotel servant could give his daughter in those days. She was not an Aspasia or an Egeria, but she knew how to make a man happy.

When she moved from Oxford Street to Berkeley Street it was probably at the Prince's expense. But she could not have chosen him as the wealthiest of her lovers. He was living now at 3A King Street Houses, off St. James's Square, a much less pretentious residence than the house in Carlton Gardens. His attempts upon the sovereign power had proved costly. They had entailed upon him a legion of pensioners and claimants upon his gratitude. Conneau, for instance, had been rewarded for his assistance with a practice in London that cost nine hundred pounds. To raise the wind, the exile borrowed right and left, procured a loan of ten thousand pounds through Orsi, and mortgaged his inheritance at Civita Nova to the Marquis Pallavicino for thirteen thousand. In September 1847,

despite his riotous living, he had a balance of between six thousand and seven thousand at Baring's.

It may have been with a view to liquidating his debts or because he had begun to lose faith in his destiny that he began to think seriously of marriage. No longer, as at Tunbridge Wells, did he consider his imperial status a bar to marriage with a mere English lady. He had designs—the phrase was current then—on the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, who would not have made a bad Empress of the Queen Victoria pattern. No doubt he was represented to her ladyship as a needy foreigner and a fortune-seeking adventurer. A more pleasing match was Miss Georgina Damer Dawson, a girl still in her teens; but she married the future Lord Fortescue at Tiverton in 1847, and the Prince philosophically attended her wedding. Nearer than either to wearing the imperial crown came Emily Rowles, the daughter of a rich Englishman and his Italian wife. Her home was at Camden Place, Chislehurst; and Louis Napoleon might have made it his own twenty-five years earlier than he did if she had not heard about Miss Howard. Yet, that a man of the Prince's station should have a mistress somewhere would not have shocked a fashionable young lady of that time, or at any rate, not shocked her parents. One half suspects Miss Howard herself of having made an appeal to Miss Rowles; or, better still, that Louis Napoleon refused to give his mistress up.

If, at the moment, he gave a thought to these women at all, he must have been deeply thankful they had refused him, when in February 1848 news came that Paris was once more in revolution.

Louis Philip was down—down after eighteen years of rule, a fugitive, like the cousin he had betrayed and dethroned, on his way to England. Persigny and Laity hurried at once to Paris—so did the cousins, Lucien's son, Pierre, and Jerome's son, "Nap," whom Louis admitted he could not wholly trust or like. The Emperor's heir sat in his rooms in St. James's or in a

corner of his club, thinking hard, smoking cigarette after cigarette, his ears, for all his apparent calmness, attuned for the faintest call. Surely this must be his chance at last, the chance he had been waiting for all his life. And yet it found him unprepared. For, as he must now have realized, he had secretly lost faith in his star; and—lo! it blazed forth, a sure beacon. The next mail might bring the summons, perhaps, to his uncle's throne. And he had come within an ace of relapsing into an English gentleman. Ah, here was Thélin with letters. France was calling him . . .

No. During the turmoil no single cry of *Vive l'Empereur* had been heard, no one had shouted for the Bonapartes. This time, it appeared, the people, the real people, were in control, not to be cajoled and bamboozled by bankers and businessmen. Socialism was in the air. Frenchmen hoped for something more than a change in the mere machinery of government. National workshops had been started.

A Terror even might be at hand. France had come near to having two rival provisional governments in Paris. The Prince considered. At forty, despite his knowledge of artillery, he was not the man for another 13th Vendémiaire, and reviewing his antecedents and his present mode of life, he must have found it impossible to picture himself a fiery wide-throated demagogue, the leader of the Parisian mob. His noble English friends eyed him slyly, wondering what Louis Napoleon was going to do now.

Then came word from Paris—"Come over." The invitation was prompted by a hint from the leaders of the National or Moderate Republican party,* with which Louis Blanc had reluctantly associated himself. The Red Spectre was frightening them. The Bonaparte who had written *The Extinction of Pauperism* seemed a safe card to play. He called himself a Republican—Louis Blanc must have recalled, if somewhat dubiously,

* So says Lavisse.

those conversations at Ham. And his name alone might win the army to the side which he championed.

He seems to have departed in a hurry, for his landlord, calling at the house that morning, found his bed still unmade and his bathtub still unemptied. His servants, presumably, were making holiday in anticipation of their master's triumph. Reaching Paris on February 25th, he found shelter under Vieillard's roof in the Rue du Sentier. Technically, of course, he was still an escaped convict. After hearing the reports of Persigny and Laity, perhaps after conversations with the Republican chiefs, he sent Persigny to the Hotel de Ville with this letter: "The People of Paris having destroyed by their heroism the last vestiges of the foreign invasion, I hasten back from exile to place myself under the flag of the Republic which has just been proclaimed. Without any other ambition than that of serving my country, I announce my arrival to the Provisional Government and beg to assure them of my devotion to the cause they represent and of my regard for them personally."

This polite note was answered by one, equally polite, from Lamartine, asking the Prince to leave France immediately. Louis Napoleon made haste to obey, and said he hoped the Provisional Government would note his obedience as a proof of his patriotism and disinterestedness. On March 2nd he found himself once more at King Street. It must have vexed him that his abortive journey had been recorded in the English papers.

His fourth manifestation on French soil had failed. He was disappointed, but he did not despair. Daring had not availed him at Strasbourg or Boulogne; he would trust now to his native caution. In Paris he had left plenty of friends to look after his interests. Before long he heard that loafers on the boulevards were tipsily calling for "Po-léon! Po-léon!" and chanting the invitation:

"Napoléon, rentre dans ton palais,
Napoléon, sois bon républicain."

Am I a good Republican? the Prince must have asked himself. No; the polite society of St. James's had cured him of that. When Persigny reported that Odilon Barrot had advised him not to stand as a candidate at the forthcoming general election, he swayed disgustedly from the Revolution towards the class in which he moved and had his being. When the mild Chartist was abroad, he slipped on the armlet of a special constable and was found patrolling Park Lane, vigilant for law and order. Asked by an amused and wondering friend what he was up to, he replied: "Order must be preserved in London."

It was not, as his apologists afterwards pretended, done to impress the law-abiding section of the French population, but out of pique. "I did not offer myself as a candidate at the elections," he wrote to Vieillard on May 11th, "because I am convinced that my position in the Chamber would be extremely embarrassing. My name, my antecedents, have made me, for better or worse, not the chief of a party, but a man on whom all disaffected elements will fix their eyes. Till society in France is re-established, my situation will be very difficult and even dangerous. I have decided, then, to stand apart. If France needed me, if I felt that I could be of use to my country, I should not hesitate . . . . I have grave affairs, meanwhile, to attend to in England. I shall wait, therefore, some months. I hope to see the Republic consolidated."

Miss Howard, it may be supposed, was in favour of action; so also must have been the Duke of Brunswick, anxious to get his money back. Was the horse they had backed going to jib at the last fence? But a proposal in the Assembly to renew the proscription of the Bonapartes roused him to activity. He wrote a strong letter of protest and claimed his rights as a French citizen. Thanks among others to Louis Blanc, the proscription was revoked and the gates of France were legally open to him.

"The man is a pretender!" cried many Frenchmen, wiser than others. And now his name was everywhere heard in Paris, above all on the lips of the workers, who saw themselves about to be duped again by the bourgeoisie. Persigny, Laity and the others worked fanatically. Their letters were every day more encouraging. Bonapartist committees had been formed. By-elections for the department of the Seine were to take place at the beginning of June, and they had nominated him. The masses were alarmed by the candidature of the Prince de Joinville and feared that an Orleanist restoration was afoot. Paris was now placarded with manifestos, recalling the democratic virtues of Napoleon and his heir. "Read his *Extinction of Pauperism*," ran one of these appeals to the working man. Unfortunately somebody had written in pencil against the name Louis Napoleon, *ex-sergent de ville de Londres*. The Prince winced and cursed that damned armlet.

Lord Normanby, the British ambassador in Paris, reported that Louis Napoleon's name was very much to the fore; and perhaps through his friends, or Miss Howard's friends, at the Foreign Office, the candidate got to hear this. But, scanning the French newspapers which reached him every morning, he found himself ignored. The Press did not want to believe in him, so they pretended, ostrich-like, that he wasn't there.

On June 5th the Prince walked over to Berkeley Street, and with his quiet unruffled air announced the joyful result. He had been elected deputy for the Seine by 4,420 votes. That was good enough, though he only came fifth on the list of successful candidates, Caussidière, Changarnier, Thiers and Victor Hugo being ahead of him. Later on came news that he had also been elected for the Yonne, Charente Inférieure and Corsica. "Your election has everywhere been the occasion of great popular enthusiasm," wrote Persigny.

His seat was waiting, yet he lingered in London. What did his constituents expect of him? In the Charente

the word "Empire" had been shouted before the polling booths; in the Seine the Socialists had put him in. Assuredly he is losing his nerve, thought some of his impatient friends. But his caution was justified by the next courier. The Provisional Government had taken the alarm. Lamartine from the tribune had denounced him as a pretender, and proposed his banishment from France. A shot fired by a clumsy National Guardsman outside the Chamber was attributed to his bloodthirsty followers. Louis attempted a dignified and conciliatory definition of his position. To the President of the Chamber he wrote on June 14th, "I did not seek the honour of being a representative, because I am aware of the unjust suspicions that attach to me. Still less do I seek power. If the people impose duties upon me, I shall fulfil them, but I disavow all those who would impute to me ambitious designs which are not mine. The name I bear is a symbol of order, of nationality, and of glory . . . it must not be used to aggravate the troubles of the country. To avoid such a calamity I would rather remain in exile."

The letter was despatched. The writer pondered over the draft—now it struck him as a shade too haughty in tone. The morning's mail announced that the government were much incensed against him. A friend called Briffault was leaving that night for Paris. Seized by something like panic, the Prince hastily scribbled a second note: "The unjust suspicion to which my election has given rise, the troubles for which it has served as an excuse, and the hostility of the executive power, impose on me the duty of refusing an honour which I am believed to have obtained by intrigue. I desire the order and maintenance of a great, virtuous, and intelligent Republic; and since I am, involuntarily, the excuse for disorder, I place my resignation within your hands."

This second letter almost certainly averted another decree of expulsion. For the tone of the first—the implied threat to do whatever the people might call on

him to do—the unfortunate omission of the word Republic—had exasperated the Assembly. But now Louis Napoleon had definitely resigned his seat there seemed to be nothing more to say, and the Assembly passed on to other business. Being informed of what had passed at the two days' sittings, the exile must have heaved a sigh of relief. No doubt he was a trifle surprised when he found that the second letter was taken to have been deliberately penned as a reply to censures passed in Paris the very hour it was being written.*

If at the moment he was disheartened, his partisans were not. In those days you could not walk along the boulevard without being offered a little flag bearing the device *Vive le Prince Louis*, and if you refused it, you would find it thrust into your buttonhole. Boxes of lights bearing the Prince's portrait were on sale everywhere. Cries were raised for Napoleon, and those who jeered had to run for it. In the first week of June, there was a sudden outcrop of Bonapartist newspapers—or rather broadsheets. There was the *Napoléon républicain*, the *Aigle républicaine*, the *Redingote grise*, and the *Petit Caporal*. But—singularly enough!—when the *Napoléon républicain* warned the workers against the peril of a *terreur bourgeoise* and hailed the exiled Prince as the champion of the oppressed masses it was sternly rebuked by its ephemeral contemporary, the *Petit Caporal*, which acclaimed the same person as the vindicator of law and order, the staunch upholder of society. This was whipping the stream; but at midsummer the waters became too turbid. The roar of the Revolution silenced Persigny's Press.

Louis Napoleon heard it, too, in his elegant retreat.

* And so it has been taken by every historian, British and French; though, since in those days, the journey between the two capitals occupied thirteen hours, it is manifestly impossible that a reply could have been received from London on the afternoon of the 16th to a debate which had taken place in Paris only the previous evening.

He who had advocated the extinction of pauperism sat silent while Cavaignac extinguished the paupers. He missed the rôle of a Spartacus. Not impossibly, a Napoleon on the barricades might have won over the soldiery to the cause of the real and social revolution. The experiment of an entirely reconstructed State was left to another age and another land. The bourgeois triumphed, and the stage was set for another sham republic.

The event left the Parisian proletariate disarmed, but bitterly resentful against the Assembly; the middle-classes, timorous and distrustful of a divided authority. The Bonapartists rubbed their hands together gleefully. Even in the Assembly, if all did not despair of the Republic, few cared at all about it. One man of prescience—Grévy—in the course of the debate upon the constitution proposed that there should be no president—that the executive functions should be entrusted to a council named by the Assembly.* The proposal was lost, mainly owing to the opposition of Lamartine. The door was being left wide open for Louis Napoleon. On August 27th he intimated to General Piat that this time he would allow himself to be nominated for the new chamber.

A manifesto signed by old General Montholon procured him an enormous number of votes. Groups of workers pronounced in his favour. After all, if he had not fought on the barricades, neither had Louis Blanc, now an exile in London. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was, in short, the alternative to everybody. And on September 17th, 1848, he was returned for five departments. In Paris he headed the list with 110,752 votes.

He left London for Paris on the twenty-third. Miss Howard was not slow to follow him.

* Grévy lived to become President of the Third Republic.

VIII

He took his seat (for the Yonne) beside Vieillard on the benches of the left, on September 25th, 1848. Everyone looked curiously at the man who had been so much talked about and whom so few Frenchmen had seen. At the sight of him disappointment was mixed with relief. This dull-eyed tired-looking man, of stooping gait and shy manner, a pretender to the imperial throne? To most of those there the idea seemed absurd. His maiden speech, consisting in a profession of his devotion to the Republic, which he read without eloquence, was tolerantly received. He was hardly seen again in the Chamber till he was stirred to a protest by a proposal to render all members of families which had reigned in France ineligible for the office of President. "I don't rise to oppose this amendment," he said, "but once more to repudiate the insinuation that I am a pretender." And he looked so little like one, his manner was so feeble and ineffective, that the mover, a deputy named Thouret, with something like a wink, announced that having heard M. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, he was prepared to withdraw the amendment that stood in his name. Which was done. The last laugh in this matter was not directed against Deputy Thouret.

The general impression in political circles was that the newcomer was a fool, an English dandy without ability and without ideas. This impression was not deliberately created by Louis Napoleon—he absented himself from the Assembly because he did not wish to commit himself as yet to any definite policy and because, accustomed to listen and not to argue, he was signally ill-adapted to parliamentary life. But while deputies retailed stories about him and chuckled over his insignificance he was taking soundings. Before leaving London he had paid a visit of respect and sympathy to Louis Blanc in exile; now he invited the

leaders of the *Montagne* to a talk at the Hotel du Rhin. He let them do the talking, and they went away not ill-pleased with him, thinking that the people's cause would not suffer at his hands. But next day he was assuring Dr. Véron, the editor of the *Constitutionnel*, of his attachment to Law and Order and expressing the conviction that the fundamental principles of Society must be firmly re-established before important innovations could be attempted.

What he really thought was that he must be given authority before anything else was attempted. He was genuinely sorry for the workers, and he perceived at once the sanity of Socialism; likewise was he convinced that the interests of the people of France would be safe in no hand but his. So pure and lofty an ambition was not to be baulked by a merely pedantic consistency or a fanatical loyalty to this or that party.

Meanwhile, the Assembly had thrown open wide the gates to him. This extraordinary body was obsessed by the fear of democracy, to defend which it had been called into being. It was even frightened of itself and had finally enacted that the President of the Republic should be chosen, not by the parliamentary majority, but by the direct voice of the nation. Thus, it was hoped, the elected representatives of the people would be kept in check.

And as a counter-check upon the executive, the President was not eligible for re-election.

As soon as the writs for the election went forth it became evident that Louis Napoleon was a candidate for the chief magistracy of the Republic. It was hardly necessary for him to proclaim himself such. All over France the peasantry were hypnotized by his great name. Too late those who had laughed at him in the Chamber realized their mistake. A deputy, Clément-Thomas, rushed into the tribune demanding: "What means this incessant campaign in the departments? Louis Napoleon Bonaparte is not a candidate for the Presidency, but for

the imperial throne!" This attack drew the Prince back to the Chamber. This time he did not falter or hang his head. An account of his parliamentary conduct, he said, he owed only to his constituents—he would take lessons from no one there on that score. As to his candidature, yes, he accepted it—accepted it because three successive elections and the unanimous vote of that Assembly against the proscription of his family warranted him in believing that the name he bore was one that might serve to consolidate society in France. "I am well aware," he concluded, "that snares are being laid for me. I shall not be entrapped. And in future I shall reply to no attacks, no interpellations made in this place, the object of which is to make me speak when I choose to be silent."

He left the tribune, and left the deputies silent and abashed with the sense that a new power had arisen in France. His only serious rival was Cavaignac, the man who had shot down the Parisian rioters. Aroused to the danger, the Press of the capital opened fire upon the Bonaparte. He was really a foreigner, they shouted; he was corrupted by the effeminate life of the English aristocracy. That unfortunate special constable business and the much less ridiculous episode of the Eglinton pageant were raked up against him. The chorus of abuse found an echo on this side of the Channel, but only the faintest reverberation in the provinces of France. It looked to sage observers as though he would get in. Thiers and Molé came reluctantly and without ostentation to his side, and flattered themselves that they had got a puppet within their experienced hands. "You will probably be elected," they told him resignedly, "so you had better cut off your moustache. It would look better." The Prince thanked them for their advice, but somehow forgot to act upon it. He read them his manifesto. They shook their heads. They disapproved of his talk of clemency towards the convicted insurgents of June. "Come," said Thiers, "I will draft a manifesto

for you." He began; but the Prince, quietly putting his own draft in a drawer, said that he thought it would do.

It did very well. "I shall engage my honour, if elected (said the candidate) to bequeath to my successor at the end of four years a strengthened authority, liberty intact, and real progress. Whether elected or not, I pledge my co-operation to any chief who will defend religion, property and the family, the eternal bases of all social order. To protect liberty and the family is to assure the freedom of worship and of education. To protect property is to maintain the inviolability of the produce of labour and to guarantee the independence and security of possessions, the keystones of civil liberty."

The reforms which appeared to him most urgent were, among others, the reduction of taxation; the encouragement of agricultural enterprises which would give work to the unemployed; and provision for the old age of the workers by the medium of benefit societies. The candidate favoured those reforms which did not ruin the rich for the benefit of the poor, but which built the prosperity of the individual on the welfare of all. He promised to cut down the number of civil servants and to combat that "fatal tendency" of the State to undertake itself works which could be carried out as well or better by private persons. Peace was his lodestar; but there were kind words for the army and a hint that the burdens of conscription might be lightened. "The Republic," he said, "must be generous and have faith in its future. I who have known exile and captivity, I long for the day when the State may wipe out all proscriptions and obliterate the last traces of our civil discords."

It is hard to understand why Thiers should have objected to so typical a conservative address. Louis Napoleon had gone over definitely to "the Right," to the party which believes that the real object of government is to protect property. Only in the vaguest way did he dare to voice his sympathy with the disinherited.

These (happily) were in a minority; and what did the bourgeois and the capitalist and the petty farmer care about them?

A singularly clever electioneering dodge was to strike copies of the manifesto in the handwriting of the great Emperor. "*C'est Lui qui parle!*" exclaimed many a *campagnard*, and found himself fortified against the pressure which the préfet and the sous-préfet were everywhere using in favour of Cavaignac, the official Republican nominee. To combat this machinery Louis Napoleon disposed of very little money. Old General Montholon sank his last franc in the great venture—and lived to find he had made a splendid investment. Every night now there were popular ovations before the Prince's hotel. Notwithstanding, he apprehended violence from his exasperated and discouraged opponents. Fleury, a young officer whom he had made his aide-de-camp and who had constituted himself his missionary to the army, escorted him, armed with a pistol and sword-stick. He changed his sleeping quarters every night.

The presidential election took place throughout France on December 10th and 11th. The results gave Louis Napoleon Bonaparte 5,434,226 votes against 1,448,107 given to Cavaignac. Ledru-Rollin and Raspail, the red candidates, came nowhere near the million. Changarnier and Lamartine were at the foot of the poll.

The Prince had expected a large majority, but was himself staggered by the figures. Seventy-five per cent. of the electors had voted for him. Even in Paris, 198,484 votes were cast for him against a total of 153,345 for all the other candidates combined. He had a majority in all but four departments. Socialists had voted for him because they despaired of the success of their own candidates and preferred anybody else to Cavaignac. The supporters of the victor of the barricades were to be found chiefly in Brittany and Maine and among his brother officers. The rank and file were solid for the Bonaparte.

Thinking men in France made grimaces and shrugged their shoulders. If you cried for the moon long enough, apparently, someone would reach it down to you. Louis Napoleon had kept on asking for power and trying to snatch it, and now five and a half millions of Frenchmen, without ever having seen him and knowing nothing about him, had given him what he wanted. France has repudiated the Republic, was the view of Persigny. She wants the Empire. The successful candidate had to take the oath of office. Persigny advised him not to. Instead, he should send a message to the Assembly, refusing to swear to the new constitution until it had been submitted to the people and ratified by their direct vote. Otherwise he was binding himself to retire from office at the end of four years. Cavaignac might take advantage of his recalcitrancy to hold on to power for a while, but what could he or the Assembly do in face of this overpowering demonstration of the nation's sympathies?

Had Louis Napoleon taken this advice, he would have gone unperjured and worn a crown the sooner. But he erred now, as he was to err so often henceforward, by excess of caution. On December 20th, 1848, in the dimly-lit chamber facing that unfriendly suspicious assembly, he swore, "in the presence of God and before the French people to remain faithful to the democratic Republic, one and indivisible, and to fulfil all the duties imposed upon him by the constitution."

He took the oath without faltering. The people who had chosen him could release him from his vow. It was unthinkable that the nation which had set him in that place would be content to let him depart at the end of a mere four years, to open the gates once more to anarchy. With an easy conscience he read his presidential address. It concluded, "If we achieve nothing great, we may at least do some good." Then, with a civil and military escort, he drove, the first President of the French Republic, through the gas-lit streets of Paris to the Elysée.

The palace which his uncle had quitted to take the road to Waterloo thirty-three years before, had been got ready for his reception by Fleury, who had drawn freely upon the late King's domestic staff. That night Louis Napoleon entertained his old friends and supporters to a dinner. Persigny, Vaudrey, Laity, the men of Strasbourg and Boulogne, they were all there. It should have been a merry party. Their ship had come through all the storms into a pleasant harbour. Their faith was justified.

They soon found they had served a generous master. The Legion of Honour, high rank in the army, rewarded the soldiers who had risked their all for the rebel. And the officer who had acted as the Bonaparte's gaoler on the road from Strasbourg into exile was given an appointment in his household. Only the Duke of Brunswick, though he got his money back, was left complaining that the chief magistrate of France did not remember the pledges he had given at Ham; and perhaps Miss Howard in her neat villa in the Rue du Cirque was beginning to wonder whether her lover's success meant ultimate success for her.

"But this Monsieur Bonaparte has brought with him from England the finest horses and the loveliest woman in the world," exclaimed a boulevardier, with half-reluctant approval, as the new President drove by. Indeed, M. Bonaparte was already more Prince than President. His receptions at the Élysée attracted for a time even the *grandes dames* of the *Faubourg*, who had, it should be said, received a hint from Berryer to patronize the champion of Law and Order. Clad in the uniform of a general of the National Guard, to which Thiers insisted he had no right whatever, he reviewed the troops, who shouted "*Vive Napoléon*," and even "*Vive l'Empereur!*"

This was very fine, and there was comfort, also, in the presidential stipend of six hundred thousand francs a year (£24,000), though he soon found this was by no means enough for his requirements. But his enjoyment

was necessarily clouded by the thought of that day foreseen by the constitution when he should hand over the keys of the Elysée to some other gentleman—Thiers made sure it would be he—and seek a place on the benches of the Assembly. The constitution forbade his re-election, and he had sworn fidelity to that constitution. He had done so with no unquiet conscience. It was unthinkable that the people who had chosen him would let him depart at the end of four years, to open the gates once more to anarchy. They would release him from his oath. The constitution could—it should—be altered. His star had not led him so high to sink again beneath the horizon.

France, he knew, had acclaimed him because she wanted a master, not a figure-head. No ruler ever entered office, it was afterwards said, with more ready-made advisers. Persigny, ever the man of action, had to be reminded that the President valued his counsel, but was not in a position to take his orders. A hint of the same kind had to be passed to de Morny, who now thought it worth while to call at the Elysée and offer his nimble wits and profound knowledge of affairs to his half-brother. Both, with a slight lift of the eyebrows, took their places with Rouher, Baroche, de Parieu, and Fould, the brother of a Jewish banker, on the President's private council. Those about Louis Napoleon now began to speak of him as *le maître*. A cabinet was formed of moderate men, Odilon Barrot at their head. The President listened silently to their debates, while he drew funny faces on the blotting pad. Then one day he wrote a very sharp note to de Malleville, his Minister of the Interior, to remind him that he was not chief of the State for nothing. Among other things he said, "There are eighty women still confined in the Salpêtrière for their share in the late insurrection. Tell me if I have power to release them, for if I have I shall certainly do so." So deeply nettled was the minister that when the President offered to apologize personally, he still per-

THE DUC DE MORNY

sisted in his resignation. Cousin "Nap," who posed as a genuine Republican, was next called to order for his outspokenness. The National Assembly found it had to accept the Prince's own henchman, Boulay de la Meurthe, for the post of Vice-President.

Nobody understood the man they had once called "The Other's nephew." Though he had momentarily scared them by proposing the stern Republican Vieillard for a seat on their board, the conservative gentlemen who formed the Committee of the Rue de Poitiers still cherished the secret belief that the Bonaparte was only keeping the throne warm for the legitimate King and was going to play the part of Monk, while Persigny and Changarnier, his commander-in-chief, were impatient for him to play the Cromwell. "Bah," exclaimed the General, when a tempting opportunity to intern the whole legislature was let slip. "This prince of ours hasn't the guts!"

He had the guts, but he did not want to break his oath. While apparently listening to his ministers he was listening also to the boy he used to be. At fourteen he had meant to be so great and kind. When he introduced legislation for the insurance of working-men, Thiers sneered and the Napoleonists thought this not a bad vote-catching device. To give fifty thousand francs to a workmen's building society was, obviously, the act of an aspiring demagogue. His mind, some puzzled observers had to admit, really did run on agricultural colonies and baths and washhouses. He seemed to be affecting the solicitude of a patriarchal seigneur for his vassals. Still, his supporters agreed, it wasn't bad policy.

It is unusual for successful pretenders to remember old friends, but this one also found it hard to forget old principles. Among old acquaintances come to greet him was Arese, the Italian Nationalist. And to him, the chief magistrate of the French Republic was heard to say, "We must do something for Italy." With this assurance Arese went back to Turin—in time for the

catastrophe of Novara. What the French Republic had done for Italy so far was to send an expedition under Oudinot to crush another infant republic and to restore the sovereignty of the Pope. What did the President think about that? Was he going to back Ledru-Rollin and his Socialists in condemning the expedition and so alienate the Conservatives who had put him in office? Uneasily the quiet man in the Elysée recalled the youth who had flaunted the Italian tricolour in the streets of Rome and charged the Papal sbirri in the defiles of the Apennines. But just then came news of a French reverse —Oudinot had been driven back from the walls of Rome. For a Bonaparte to acquiesce in the dishonour of the French colours, Louis Napoleon was pleased to find quite unthinkable. He penned a despatch to Oudinot, declaring that the honour of the French arms must be vindicated at any cost, and that reinforcements would immediately be sent. That repulse before Rome had solved a knotty case of conscience. In the Rue de Poitiers they breathed again. And that despatch, read by all France as inspired by generous indignation, was a distinct slap in the face to the lukewarm Assembly. But the ideals of his youth were to show unexpected vitality in Louis Napoleon. Later on in the year (1849) when the insult to French arms had been atoned for, and the Pope's authority restored, in a letter to his friend, Edgard Ney, he went out of his way to explain that the action of the French government was justified only because a Republican system had been imposed on the Roman people against their own will; and that by the re-establishment of the temporal power he understood the secularization of the administration, a general amnesty, and Liberal government—none of which things His Holiness had any intention of granting. Louis Napoleon had long arguments with his conscience, if he refused to argue with anybody else.

He was able now to speak his mind more freely. In its panic fear of the Reds the country was ready to throw

itself into the arms of a despot. A demonstration of Ledru-Rollin and a few followers against the government's Roman policy had been crushed without the least difficulty by Changarnier. The new chamber was in the main Conservative, but upon the success of the Socialists at the by-elections the cry was raised: "The barbarians are at the gates!" Already the President had dismissed Odilon Barrot and his colleagues, whom he had long suspected of discussing matters of State in his absence. He had dismissed them, he told the Chamber, because through them the country did not hear the voice of the man elected in December. "A whole system triumphed at my election. The name of Napoleon is itself a programme."

This was plain speaking, and the new ministers—Fould, Baroche and Ferdinand Barrot among them—were obviously the President's men. But it was upon Thiers's proposal that he gave his consent to a Bill which, by imposing all sorts of residential qualifications and the disfranchisement of all persons convicted even of minor offences, reduced the French electorate from nine to six millions. "Louis Napoleon," said Thiers, "assented to the measure with great apparent reluctance perhaps, to some extent real." He was revolted, of course, by the injustice of the measure and by the ingratitude it expressed towards the people who had elected him; but he must have perceived the handle it would give him against the Assembly itself. His personal popularity was fast growing; it was already enormous. The new railways enabled him to make progresses and to show himself all over France. Venerated for the name he bore, he knew how to make himself loved. He had a genius for those graceful acts and sayings which bring the tears to the Frenchman's eyes. To an eminent degree he possessed that peculiarly Latin quality, magnanimity. Visiting the sick during a severe outbreak of cholera, he decorated a hospital attendant and observed that it was not less glorious to die while comforting the

afflicted than upon the field of battle. At an official banquet at Compiègne, an aged peasant in a blue blouse who had fought through Napoleon's wars dined at the President's table. A girl of the people asked him to her wedding-feast—the President at once complied, and in the poor man's home drank to the happiness of the bride and bridegroom—not forgetting to leave a bank note behind him. The soldier who wanted to see his dying mother—the mother who wanted her son released from the army—these had but to force their way to the Chief of the State for their prayer to be granted. This President realized all humble folks' ideal conception of a King. Of rancour he was incapable. No man who had had any share in defeating his early attempts upon the sovereign power had any reason to fear for himself on that account. Indeed, so well known was this trait of his, that an officer approaching him on parade with a petition for promotion mentioned that he had had the honour to arrest him at Strasbourg.

The Orleanists despaired of him as a catspaw, and the Legitimists forsook his salon. He was plainly bent on a second term. It was equally plain that if the country were consulted he would get it. Relieved by his firm government of their dread of the Reds, the legislature started to oppose him. "I observe," said the President at Dijon, "that the Assembly supports me whenever I propose repressive measures, but never when I want to do any good." In the autumn of 1850 he stumped the country. In the Republican East he was, here and there, the object of hostile demonstrations—notably at Besançon, where he was rudely hustled and threatened with violence, and at Strasbourg, where the municipal council refused to vote funds for his reception. At Metz the officers of the National Guard shouted "*Vive la république et rien que la république.*"

Elsewhere it was a triumphal progress. Pau replied to Metz with cries of "*A bas les rouges! A bas les blancs! A bas la république! Vive l'Empereur!*" Normandy hailed

him as the saviour of the country. The Bishop of Bayeux recognized in him the defender of the Church and hoped that his government would last for ever. At Compiègne he announced that his fixed idea was to do all he could for the workers. He spoke more sincerely then, though perhaps only a few suspected it, than at Ham, when he expressed contrition for having sought to overthrow constituted authority, and drank a health to those loyal souls who subordinated their convictions to the law. It was a strange confession from one who had over and over again declared that no authority was lawful unless it was based on the people's will—from one who was at this moment seeking such an expression in order to upset the legal constitution. Designed, I suppose, to curry favour with the law-abiding bourgeois, it provoked an indignant remonstrance from the Bonapartist Press. Since the President had retracted his former views and repented of his attempts to subvert the government of Louis Philip, he must regard those who helped him as fellow criminals. It was suggested that Vaudrey and Laity and Montholon should return him their decorations; also that the President should drop the name Napoleon and call himself Louis XIX. He has exposed himself, complained his followers, to the just observation of the Radicals that Order is what every conspirator supports, once he has grasped power.

Those nearer the Prince held their peace. They knew it behoved him to be all things to all men. He had made it plain enough that he still believed the will of the people to be the supreme law. "Whatever duty France imposes upon me," he said solemnly, "I shall be ready to fulfil; and France will not perish in my hands." France answered with a passionate demand for the revision of the constitution.

"There will be no revision of the constitution—no second term," said the Burgraves, as Thiers, Molé and their cronies had come to be called. Parliament would never grant it, and this demagogue was no Cromwell.

The College of Idaho
CALDWELL, IDAHO.

Something more than loyalty to the exiled royalties at Frohsdorf and Claremont—something more personal than fidelity to this formal middle-class Republic—inspired these men's hostility to Louis Napoleon. His concern for the poor—the vile multitude, as the historian of his uncle called them—his idealism, his generosities, had a curiously irritating effect upon these politicians. And because they hated him they persuaded themselves that they despised him. He was not a strong man! They had the strong man on their side to defend the constitution. This was Changarnier, that veteran soldier, the commander-in-chief of the Paris garrison. At first ready to disperse the Assembly at the President's bidding, he had been goaded by jealousy into sulky, then overt antagonism. "Come over to our side," said Persigny to him. "You are a great man in your way, but you have no name to conjure with like Bonaparte's." Gruffly the soldier refused the offer of a marshal's baton—even the promised dignity of Constable of France. He would rather bring back the Orleanist, and advertised his new allegiance by attending a Mass at Notre Dame for the repose of the soul of Louis Philip. "Let Louis Napoleon try any tricks," he assured the Burgraves, "and I'll clap him into Vincennes." The politicians cackled gleefully. They recalled the poor pretender's pitiable performances at Strasbourg and Boulogne, and agreed that there was little seriously to be feared from him.

There was an inferiority complex in the make-up of Le Bas's shy pupil. He was as bitterly conscious of his incapacity for violence as his detractors could have been. If he was to be lifted to the supreme power, it must be on the shields of the soldiery, not by measuring swords with them. Not trusting to the magic of his name alone, he had systematically courted the army, and, as his purblind adversaries should by this time have seen, with complete success. He invited mixed parties of officers and non-commissioned officers to dine with him, and lit his cigar at a sergeant's. Changarnier, forced

to be present, frowned and sneered. At the reviews, individual soldiers, then whole ranks of troopers, shouted "*Vive l'Empereur.*" A general, Neumayer, enjoined silence on the troops, then came running to the commander-in-chief with the news that the President had relieved him of his command with the promise of a better post in the western departments. Furious, Changarnier issued a formal order, enforcing his dismissed subordinate's injunction.

"We must get rid of Changarnier," said Louis Napoleon with an effort. "He's too strong," declared his Minister of War; but the President having made up his mind, was not to be turned from it. He found another minister (Regnaut de St. Jean d'Angely), who would do anything for a nephew of Napoleon, and who had no hesitation in countersigning the necessary decree. The President handed it to Fleury. "Give it to the General," he said, "before he is out of bed and before he can take counsel with that fierce aide-de-camp of his." Even so, Fleury fully expected to have the order thrown in his face and to be himself arrested. At the Elysée, Louis Napoleon, perhaps a little quavery, smoked cigarettes and waited. An hour passed and Fleury returned, triumphant. Changarnier had read the order relieving him of his command, had glared, had said, "H—m, your Prince has a funny way of rewarding my services," and—had obeyed. The Strong Man had yielded. To his frightened ministers the President said, "Did you expect me to keep a commander-in-chief who threatened to send me to Vincennes?" No doubt he felt twice the size he had been after thus successfully matching himself against a tried man of action, a commander of legions.

There was tremendous excitement in the lobbies of the Palais Bourbon. Thiers threw off his thin mask and declared himself against the government. The President asked for an additional grant of nearly two million francs. Delightedly the Assembly refused it. The Prince promptly sold his horses and carriages by

public auction, discontinued his receptions at the Elysée, and (which everybody did not know) borrowed half a million from the Spanish ambassador, the redoubtable Narvaez. The Spaniard, like old Joshua Bates of Boston and Baring's, knew who was going to rule France

A petition for the revision of the constitution, bearing 1,356,000 signatures, was presented to the Chamber. All but seven of the departmental councils demanded it. The motion was put. There were 446 ayes and 278 noes. The motion was lost, the constitution requiring a two-thirds majority for revision.

IX

The result, though it might have been expected, disappointed Louis Napoleon. The Assembly would not absolve him from his oath, and would afford the nation no opportunity of doing so. Even the majority of those who had voted for revision had done so in the interests of the House of Orleans. He saw himself forced into unconstitutional courses, towards a technical perjury. While he hesitated, his partisans insisted that it was time to make an end of this insensate parliament which denied the people the right to choose their own ruler. The Prince came slowly round to their view, but objected that he had opposed to him Changarnier, Cavaignac, Lamoricière, the best tested blades of France. As to that, Fleury knew of a sword to be matched against theirs. The very man for the job, St. Arnaud, was waiting at that moment in Algeria for an opportunity to prove his mettle. He was given that opportunity and acquitted himself so well in a short campaign against a tribe of Kabyles, that the soldiery, tired perhaps a little of "the old Africans," were ready to acclaim him as a new hero. Louis Napoleon in his summer quarters at St. Cloud perceived he had the needful instrument

and debated when to use it. He decided to strike during the parliamentary vacation. A scruple of conscience no doubt suggested the moment. It would not be necessary to dissolve by force an Assembly that was not sitting, a direct appeal with some show of legality might be made to the people, and all violence averted by a judicious display of military power. The deputies would bend before the accomplished fact and ratify it upon their return to the Palais Bourbon. If such was his hope it was dashed by St. Arnaud. The General curtly refused his co-operation. The Prince, roused for once from his accustomed calm, rated Fleury soundly, and said that he would put himself at the head of the troops. The aide-de-camp sought out St. Arnaud, and having heard his explanation, brought him to St. Cloud. The refusal had been prompted by merely tactical considerations (brought forward, it appeared, by Mme. St. Arnaud)—the coup d'état was not to be carried out without arresting the deputies. To leave them scattered about France was, in the General's opinion, to provoke a new Gironde; "and," he said, "when you ask a man to throw himself off the roof, it is only fair to let him choose the moment for doing it."

The President shook St. Arnaud's hand and told him he would call on him. Persigny, Fleury, de Morny, all were in favour of strong measures, but he still shrank from them. He was in history now, and knew that his perjury would never be forgotten so long as men read books. Besides, there was always the risk of failure. He was very comfortable at the Elysée and had no wish to go back to Ham. The lady in the Rue du Cirque, it may be supposed, wanted him to remain as he was. A President might continue unmarried or (better still) marry one of low degree—an Emperor must take a royal bride. Louis Napoleon gave the refractory Assembly one more chance. He dismissed his more conservative ministers, formed a cabinet of St. Arnaud and other personal adherents, and in a message read in the

Chamber on November 4th, 1851, asked for a revocation of the law of May 31st, 1850, and a return to universal suffrage. He had consented, he said, and truly, to the disfranchisement of three million Frenchmen only as a temporary expedient; the time had now come to restore their votes and to revert to universal suffrage on which the Republic was avowedly based. He pointed out that the constitution required the successful candidate for the presidency to score at least two million votes, which under the old electorate meant no more than a fifth of the total votes cast; whereas, with an electorate reduced to six millions, it meant not less than one-third. In the very likely event of no candidate scoring that proportion, the election would be left to the Assembly, and the nation would not be allowed to choose its own head.

This argument appears unanswerable; but though Frenchmen pride themselves on their reasonableness, hatred of the President would not allow it to prevail. Yet the motion was rejected only by 355 votes against 348. Seven men—Adolphe Thiers among them—thus voted the destruction of the Second Republic. Dining at the Austrian ambassador's on November 25th, Falloux, Guizot and Molé picked the President's character to pieces, and, to their host's amusement, agreed on his absolute incapacity, There was to be no trouble with him! Meanwhile, the Orleans family were packing their trunks at Claremont, awaiting the signal to return to their country, and the Prince de Joinville had got a Belgian passport, ready to raise the Royalists of Lille.

The questors whose function it was to watch over the safety of the Assembly did not feel so sure that the President was harmless. They stuck up bills in the barracks, reminding the troops that their duty was to protect the representatives of the people; which notices were quietly removed by St. Arnaud, who maintained in the chamber that they were not in accordance with the last edition of the constitution. Changarnier, however, was convinced of the army's loyalty to the Republic

as by law established. "Mandatories of the nation," he cried with a fine flourish," deliberate in peace."

Meantime, Louis Napoleon's scruples must have been pretty well overcome by the arguments he had used in his message. His oath had been pledged to the democratic Republic, and by the elimination of one-third of the electors that Republic had ceased to exist. He represented the original electorate—the Assembly, the lesser and the new. The constitution which he had sworn to uphold had been altered so substantially as to be in effect no longer the same thing. Even in the Assembly, as has been seen, there had been an actual majority for revision. A man with a much more sensitive conscience than Louis Napoleon's might have honestly regarded himself as discharged from his oath.

He hardly made a secret of his intentions; preferring, if he was about to commit an illegal act, not to do it treacherously. A circular, from his Minister of War to the army, laid it down that a soldier was bound to obey his immediate superior and that the responsibility for his acts fell ultimately on the commander who gave the order. This should have been taken as fair warning as to what was to come. On November 9th the President received six hundred officers at his palace. "I shall ask nothing from you," he declared, "but what is within my rights, what is consistent with a soldier's honour and with the interests of the country. Should the day of peril come, I would not say, 'Forward—I follow,' but 'I lead—follow me!' "

Did he hope by these plain intimations to cow the Assembly into a timely submission or to goad it into unconstitutional courses, and so relieve himself from blame? Twice he postponed the decisive step—from the 20th to the 25th of November, finally till December 2nd. "Does he want to be forestalled?" his partisans asked themselves. It seemed impossible that his opponents should neglect these warnings. Then through de Flahault, de Morny's father, he heard of the activities

of the Orleans Princes. "It must be now or never," said Louis Napoleon Bonaparte.

Everybody—the parliament, the diplomatic body, the Press, the public—had long been expecting something to happen; but on the first day of December nothing seemed to presage it was so near at hand. Yet it was the eve of the anniversary of Austerlitz, and the President, everyone knew, believed in luck and omens. He received his visitors as usual, with his kind, grave, gentle manner. De Morny was seen at the theatre and, questioned by a lady whether the situation was not shortly to be cleared by a sweep of the broom, replied that he didn't know, but that in any event he would take care to be at the handle end. At ten o'clock that night he joined his half-brother in his cabinet. He found there St. Arnaud, Mocquard, the President's life-long friend and secretary, and Maupas, the new prefect of police, an unscrupulous man specially selected for the work in hand but not by any means as bold as his employer supposed. To Persigny an active rôle was not immediately allotted—in this business a more delicate touch than his was needed. But he knew well that the great hour was at hand, and sat up all night with Fleury, waiting for his summons. Magnan, the general who had refused to help at Lille and who now commanded the Paris garrison, was ready to obey, but cautiously preferred to remain a stranger to the plot. From a secret drawer the President took three dossiers, marked *Rubicon*, and laid them on the table at which his uncle had written his abdication. To de Morny, St. Arnaud and Maupas he handed their instructions. De Morny found himself appointed Minister of the Interior. "Well," he said, "it's understood that we are risking our hides." Mocquard chuckled. "Mine is pretty well worn out," he remarked. The Prince said: "I have faith in my destiny. Here on my finger is my mother's ring, and engraved on it is the device *Hope*."

The plan of operations bore his own impress. As at

Strasbourg and Boulogne, he was wishful to avoid violence, above all bloodshed. At dead of night Magnan, upon orders from his superior, set his troops in motion. They occupied all the tactical positions in the capital. A few strayed revellers that night marked, perhaps, the marching columns, and guessed what was afoot. Col. de Béville drove up to the State printing office, round which a cordon of police had formed. Within a squad of men, warned for night work, were handed copy, curiously cut up, and told to proceed with it at once. Detecting suspicious words and phrases, some demurred; but finding each a couple of policemen at his elbow, they took up their composing sticks. Meanwhile, before the President's proclamations were ready for the press the metropolitan commissaries of police waited, one by one, upon Maupas and hurried away into the night, each with his instructions and unaware that his fellows were similarly employed. Within forty minutes nearly seventy leading politicians, including Thiers, Changarnier, Cavaignac, Bedeau and Lamoricière, had been roused from their beds, put into cabs, and lodged under lock and key in the prison of Mazas. Before the dawn policemen were busy placarding the walls of Paris with the President's proclamations. The first Parisians astir read that the Assembly was dissolved and universal suffrage restored. The Assembly was denounced as a hotbed of sterile intrigues. Those deputies were stigmatized who had overthrown two monarchies and were now overthrowing the Republic. The President was determined to end the era of civil strife and appealed to the People as his sole judge. (But in the appeal to the army, adjoining, he relied apparently upon the support of the troops.) Then followed the outlines of the constitution he proposed for France—a system based on that by which the great Napoleon had restored peace, liberty and prosperity to the nation.

In the Elysée Louis Napoleon, having set the clockwork of revolution in motion, waited, perhaps in his

cabinet, perhaps stretched sleepless on his bed. Mocquard and Thélin may have kept him company; or he may have preferred to await the issue alone. With trepidation, he confessed, he had waited for the clock to strike at Strasbourg—he was an older and not a bolder man now. Horses stood saddled in the palace stables, and Fleury had been charged to have an escort ready. For flight?—unquestionably so, though the successful conspirators would have it that the Prince, if luck had turned against him, would have made a last stand and died at the Tuileries. More probably, that night, as the possibility of failure intruded itself, he wondered what sort of welcome would be extended to him if he appeared once more a fugitive in England. For if all were lost he could hardly claim that honour at least was saved. The hours dragged by. A drizzling rain was falling. He could have expected no loud call to arms, for the drums of the National Guard had been stove in by his orders, and Magnan's dispositions included the occupation of every belfry.

At six he sent for Fleury, who found him booted and spurred, but in a dressing-gown, taking his coffee. He now apprised the commandant of what had been planned and should have come to pass in the night, and charged him to find what the troops were doing. A happy thought struck the soldier. The men, he pointed out, might remain under arms for hours, even days, and might be cut off from their rations—had His Highness any ready money—Thélin, summoned, counted out fifty thousand francs in coin. "That's all I possess," said the President. Fleury thought it would be enough; it would be five francs for each soldier, roughly, and that would keep them in a good temper.

The news Fleury brought back was—Victory! Everything had gone off without a hitch; the Palais Bourbon had been occupied and the keepers and questors seized, the population had read the proclamations and there was no sign anywhere of resistance. The time had come

for the Prince to show himself. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 2nd December he rode out of the Elysée, his uncle, old King Jerome, on one side, his Spanish friend, Narvaez, on the other, and followed by St. Arnaud, de Flahault, and a dozen others, clattered across the Carrousel and along the wet streets of Paris. The soldiers cheered him vociferously; the citizens eyed the law-breaking President curiously and wondered what would be the next act in the drama.

Fleury presently heard. An officer galloped up and reported that the bulk of the deputies, Berryer at their head, had taken possession of the Palais Bourbon, and having been expelled by Col. Espinasse, were now in session at the *mairie* of the Tenth arrondissement. "Disperse them at once," whispered the commandant; and this order given on his own responsibility was confirmed by de Morny, who at seven that morning had taken possession of the Ministry of the Interior. But the deputies held their fort the greater part of the afternoon. They declared Louis Napoleon Bonaparte guilty of high treason and pronounced his deprivation. "Let us call on the people of the faubourgs to rise in defence of the constitution," cried a Radical deputy. "No, no—the law, not revolution," shouted the majority, more anxious to save their faces than to risk their skins. But the law availed them not at all. Having overawed the subaltern officers sent to disperse them, they yielded at length to a show of force directed by two commissaries of police. In the court-yard, Oudinot, who had been appointed Commander-in-Chief by the Assembly, appealed in vain to the troops for obedience or for help. He was conducted with the other two hundred and odd representatives of the people to the barracks on the Quai d'Orsay, whence they were presently transferred in police vans to Mont Valerien, Mazas and Vincennes. The Judges of the Supreme Court hastily convened to pronounce sentence upon the violator of the constitution, were interrupted by another commissary. Sub-

mitting to force, they adjourned indefinitely, but not before a copy of their finding had been got hold of by the culprit's opponents.

Louis Napoleon had not, like Cromwell, dared to face the outraged parliament. This and the sterner measures that followed were initiated by his lieutenants and approved by him. They knew and he knew that he was no use in a row. He was ever weak in the face of steadfast and angry opposition. So he sat where he was most useful, at the Elysée, his cousin Mathilde keeping him company. Since the Arenenberg love passages she had married and been separated from Prince Demidoff. It was a pity she couldn't flatter herself that Louis was risking all this to win her favour, as he had pretended he was doing at Strasbourg. Her brother, "Nap," was known to be in the other camp, urging his colleagues of the Montagne to resistance. Father Jerome pottered between the Elysée and the Invalides, wondering which was the safer side to take. That was what most people in Paris were asking themselves. There were few callers at the presidential palace. At four Louis Napoleon rode forth once more to reconnoitre. Business was going on as usual, omnibuses were running, and it was still raining. Again comforted by the cheers of the troops (five francs could procure a lot of refreshment in those days), the President went home. That evening he forgot to appear at a dinner at his Foreign Secretary's. A *migraine* was mentioned as an excuse. Doubtless the man wanted sleep; but perhaps he could not bring himself at that moment to meet the eyes of ambassadors and other men who had a more punctilious regard than he for the sanctity of an oath. It had been easier to face the jury of peers defeated but unperjured.

He might be defeated even yet. For another three days the issue was not decided. The credit of the victory belongs not to him, but to his half-brother. Already on the night of the fateful December 2nd, Victor Hugo, disregarded by the police because he was a mere writer,

had called on the people of the faubourgs to rally in defence of the Republic. The decree outlawing the President was circulated. If the rising was not immediate and general, it was because the workers remembered the Assembly had abolished universal suffrage and had not forgotten the bloody hand of Cavaignac. When Baudin, a deputy, harangued them from a newly-raised barricade, a man shouted, "Do you want us to die to keep you in office at twenty-five francs a day?" A shot brought down Baudin. "Now," he gasped, "you'll see how one dies for twenty-five francs a day!" Realizing when it was too late that the restoration of universal suffrage meant simply the right to elect a despot, the people of Montmartre and St. Antoine took up arms. Maupas, scared, sent telegram after telegram to the Minister of the Interior. The alarum echoed in the Elysée. Louis Napoleon declared he was going to show himself to the insurgents at the head of his cavalry. "You may quite possibly be killed," reasoned Fleury, "and what good will that do?" The President, wisely, left things to his lieutenants. De Morny, busy sending despatches to the provincial prefects, kept his head. He did not hesitate to offer suggestions to St. Arnaud and Magnan, asking them, among other things, to deal firmly with the Conservative clubs as well as with the Republicans. Following Cavaignac's method, the generals waited till the insurrection had reached a head, then struck hard. Their troops struck even harder than they intended, for passing along the central boulevards they fired volley after volley into the crowd of sight-seers on the pavements and upwards at the windows. Those volleys were to echo for many a year in Louis Napoleon's ear, and awakened a very angry response in England.

"Any man found on or constructing a barricade will be shot out of hand," ran St. Arnaud's savage order. His ruthlessness had the merit of success. On December 5th Louis Napoleon was informed that he was complete

master of the capital. The news from the provinces was not so good. At the head of every department in France is a préfet who is appointed by and takes his orders from the Minister of the Interior—a system which every would-be usurper of the supreme power must find vastly convenient. Notwithstanding, here and there, at spots far apart, brave men of the common sort had risen in defence of the constitution. Their resistance was represented by the préfets as the beginnings of the Red Terror, their overt acts were magnified after a fashion only too familiar in our early twentieth century into "atrocities." They were crushed by the soldiery. De Morny had no hesitation about directing the plebiscite to be taken all over France by secret ballot. His confidence was justified. The question put to every elector was: "Does the nation desire to maintain Louis Napoleon in power and to delegate to him the powers necessary to establish a constitution in accordance with the principles set forth in his proclamation of Dec. 2nd?' The result of the voting was officially notified to the President on the last day of the year 1851. France had approved his action by 7,439,216 ayes against 640,737 noes.

Reading the figures, the successful usurper might have agreed with an historian of our own day in marvelling not at the number of ayes but that there should have been so many noes. For "Louis Napoleon having destroyed everything except himself, the choice lay between him and nothingness. On the political ocean, his vessel alone survived; thus, there was no alternative between embarking with him and swimming across a stormy and uncharted sea towards an unknown and invisible shore. It is, therefore, a matter for surprise that over six hundred thousand citizens should have voted for so desperate a course. In presence of the accomplished fact, the moral liberty of the vote disappeared. It was no longer a matter for justification, but for absolution. Thus is explained the number of affirma-

tive votes; and it is precisely this explanation which lessens their value."*

It was at a cost of perhaps five hundred lives that Louis Napoleon mounted to power. Borrowing the phrase of an admiring bishop, which, owing to our peculiar confusion of laws with law, cannot be rendered into English, he asserted, "*Je suis sorti de la légalité pour rentrer dans le droit.*" This defence satisfied many of those even now who formally opposed him, but presently hastened to bow before the risen sun. It seems not altogether to have satisfied the ex-Republican, the grandson of the revolutionary noble. The business smelt too much of perfidy and blood. "The *coup d'état* troubles you like the shirt of Nessus," remarked his wife in after days. "I am always thinking about it," said Louis Napoleon.†

X

Louis Napoleon was dictator of France. Why he did not proclaim himself Emperor, thus substantiating Thiers' words, "The Empire is coming, the Empire is here," puzzled a good many people. True, he always took his time; but it is likely that he had a more definite reason for resisting a while longer the whisper of his ambition. The treaties of Vienna still formed the international law of Europe, and, they, like the later treaties of M. Clemenceau, gave the victors a right of veto upon the vanquished's choice of a Sovereign. It was not yet known how the other Powers would view the re-establishment of the dynasty overthrown at Waterloo. But the *coup d'état* might be represented and was in fact accepted as a domestic incident, a quarrel

* De la Gorce.

† *Entretiens avec l'Impératrice Eugénie:* Paléologue. *Revue des Deux Mondes.* Tome 44.

between the executive and the legislature of a Republic already recognized. "Let us preserve the Republic," said the President magnanimously, "it threatens no one, and may reassure everybody." An additional motive for delay was to be found in the ruthlessness of his partisans. The work of repression, absurdly enough, had been carried on in the name of the Republic. Napoleon hoped the dirt would stick to it. He wished the Empire to be baptized by the suffrages of the people, not in their blood.

Meantime he let his ministers take what steps they thought fit to assure his triumph. The arrested deputies were almost all of them set free after a few hours' incarceration. When some refused to be so casually released from an unlawful detention they were coaxed into carriages, driven out to a field, and there left stranded. Deference was paid to the importance of Thiers, Changarnier, Lamoricière and de Girardin by a decree which *momentarily removed* them from the territories of the Republic. De Morny was tender towards his Orleanist friends. But sixty-six members of the Left, including Victor Hugo, were positively exiled. To deal with the rank and file of the disaffected, mixed tribunals, so called because they were each composed of a general, a préfet, and a State attorney, were set up all over France. Upwards of 22,000 persons were imprisoned or otherwise punished. Of these, 480 lay on a convict ship at Brest, awaiting transportation to the dreaded Cayenne, when an order arrived, commuting their sentences to exile or deportation to Algeria. From whom that order emanated may easily be guessed. Louis Napoleon now found himself strong enough to curb his adherents' ferocity. On March 27th, 1852, the mixed tribunals were abolished, and the task of reviewing their sentences was entrusted to three commissioners, Canrobert, Espinasse and Quentin-Bauchart. Only the last of these exercised his prerogatives as the President would have wished. In the long run pardon was offered to practically

anyone who would pledge himself to accept the changed order of things. Notwithstanding, at the beginning of 1853 the number of the proscribed still exceeded six thousand. A hundred and fifty were struggling for life amid the fevers and pestilent airs of Cayenne. Men had been guillotined, too, for alleged assassinations at Clamecy and on the frontier, which were in reality mere killings occurring during the political affrays.

Napoleon could have spared them if he wished, for by virtue of the new constitution he enjoyed the prerogative of mercy among all the other attributes of a despotic sovereign. Next perhaps to Nicholas of Russia he was now the most absolute monarch in Christendom. The new constitution of the French "Republic," signed by him on January 14th, had been written by Rouher in twenty-four hours, as well it might have been, seeing that it was closely modelled on the constitution of the year VIII and followed the lines laid down by the President in his published works. The Chief of the State, having been elected directly by the people for a term of ten years, was to be directly and personally responsible to the people only. It was not made clear how they were to get rid of him if they were not satisfied. Besides the powers of making war or peace, commanding the forces, making treaties, and nominating to all the offices of State, the President possessed the exclusive right of initiating legislation. The House of Commons or *Corps législatif* could propose amendments, but if these were not accepted by the Council of State, they could only throw out the Bill in its entirety. Everything was done to limit the powers of parliament and to belittle it, according to the Prince's repeatedly expressed views. That no encouragement should be left to oratorical display, it was forbidden to publish the debates. But to the *Corps législatif* was, after all, left the most essential of parliamentary functions, the granting of supply.

There was to be nothing in the nature of a cabinet. The President chose his ministers how and where he

would, except from the body of the Assembly. They were simply Secretaries of State, and no collective responsibility united them. The country was thus spared the spectacle of a capable and popular Financial Secretary resigning because the Minister of War had forgotten to order enough pipeclay.

Having gone so far, the framer of the constitution took fright at the measure of power he had contrived for himself, and said, "Let there be a Senate." This singular body was composed of persons chosen by the 'Chief of the State' on account of their eminence *or their fortune*, their talent, or their meritorious services: but, once chosen, they were senators for life, and with their vaguely defined powers of supervision, counsel and remonstrance, might easily have proved a serious check upon autocracy. The whole instrument of government having been drawn in view of an hereditary monarchy, the Prince may have contemplated the almost inevitable event of some utterly incompetent successor; such as his existing heirs, King Jerome and his sons, were esteemed likely to prove. For all his hatred and distrust of parliamentary government, the moribund Republican within him forced Louis Napoleon when proclaiming the constitution to admit that it might one day be seriously modified. "We have settled," he said, "only the things which could not be left unsettled. We have not encircled the destinies of a great nation with an impassable ring. A constitution is the work of time, and there are openings in this one which offer in national crises other means of salvation than a revolution." The Bonaparte had again effected a transaction with the Beauharnais!

The vast majority of the French people would have been quite content to let him "trample on the prostrate body of Liberty." But when he decreed the confiscation of the enormous personal estate of the House of Orleans, for the benefit, be it said, of the State, a thrill of horror went through the most respectable circles in France.

"*C'est le premier vol de l'aigle*," wittily exclaimed Dupin. Those who had helped him to tear up the old constitution and had eagerly hounded down its humble defenders —those who were forward with excuses for the destruction of mere human life upon the boulevards—could not stomach this contempt for the sacredness of Property. De Morny at once resigned; many politicians of the Right withdrew their support and their countenance from the new government. It was disquieting how the revolutionary and the visionary peeped out at moments from behind the President. Hübner, the Austrian ambassador, remarked on that, and made sure he belonged still to the carbonari and other secret societies.

That other unquiet spirit, Persigny, had succeeded de Morny at the Interior. He could not abide his master's temporising policy, and determined to put the imperial crown upon his head whether he liked it or not. When Napoleon set forth on another progress in order precisely to test the feeling of the nation, his over-zealous minister sent for the préfets of the three departments through which he must next pass, and told them that they had got to organize demonstrations in favour of the Empire. At Bourges the President's reception on his arrival was cordial, but not enthusiastic. It was only the next day that cries of "*Vive l'Empereur* were heard. Napoleon became suspicious and rebuked Persigny for his officiousness. "My journey," he said, "is an interrogation." He did not wish the people's reply to be dictated beforehand. At Lyon he said, "If the modest title of President is sufficient for the mission which has been entrusted to me, it is not I who from personal interest would wish to exchange it for that of Emperor."

But as he proceeded he perceived that his partisan's zeal had merely anticipated the genuine aspirations of the French people. In the south-east he was hailed as Emperor. Even in the Hérault, the scene of recent uprisings, the same cries were heard, mingled with

demands for an amnesty. "The Prince is like the sun," wrote St. Arnaud, who had at first been very much on his guard in these regions. "Upon his approach the ice melts." The clergy proved themselves better missionaries of the Empire even than the préfets. The President had publicly declared that he favoured the Church, not because it might be a useful political instrument, but because he believed in it. At Bordeaux, on October 9th, 1852, he pronounced at last the words so eagerly expected. "For the good of the country it is not necessary to apply new systems, but to guarantee, before everything else, confidence in the present and security in the future. And for this reason it seems that France is returning to the Empire." He paused. "There is a doubt which I must dispel. There are those who will say, 'The Empire is war.' But I say, 'The Empire is peace.' Peace, because France herself desires it, and when France is satisfied the world remains tranquil."

Persigny rubbed his hands delightedly. What else was said as the progress continued mattered little now. Napoleon stopped at Amboise to open the prison gates of Abd el Kader, the Algerian chief. Intensely happy, he was in the mood to make everybody else happy also. Thus at Marseilles he responded to the apologetic overtures of Cousin Nap, and folded him to his heart.

Paris received him with frantic enthusiasm. The revival of the Empire foretold in people's imagination the Golden Age. "Luxury and comfort," cried Hübner, "have reappeared as though by enchantment!" Twelve days after the hero's return the ambassador saw him smiling on the people from his box at the Opera. Miss Howard was also observed to occupy a box in the front row and Abd el Kader another in the second.

A few formalities remained to convert the moribund Republic into an Empire. Ten senators brought in a Bill to effect the transformation. "Emerging from great political upheavals," said the reporter of the Bill, "the peoples invariably throw themselves with joy into

the arms of the strong man sent them by Providence. . . . The Napoleonic monarchy absorbed the first Republic, it must absorb the second. The Republic is contained in the Empire." The Senate voted, with one dissentient, the re-establishment of the French Empire in the person of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte. The dissentient was the Prince's old friend, Vieillard. "Let this make no difference between us," wrote the Prince. "Come to lunch as usual."

The French thought their destinies could safely be entrusted to a man who acted like that. Another plebiscite confirmed the vote of the Senate by 7,824,189 ayes against 253,145 noes and 2,062,798 abstentions. In the evening of December 1st the councillors of State, the senators, and the deputies, escorted by mounted torch-bearers, drove out to St. Cloud, and invited the President to assume the imperial title in conformity with the will of the nation. Napoleon accepted, in terms which implied a complete break with the past. He was glad, he said, that his reign had not originated like so many others, in violence and fraud. Yet the bullet marks of his pretorians could still be seen on the walls of Parisian houses. He went on: "Not only do I recognize the governments that have preceded me, but I inherit, in a sense, what they have done, good or evil." Yet, in a loftier situation, he had declared before the jury of peers that the acts of those governments which had not been based on the sovereignty of the people were null and void. "My reign," he proclaimed, "does not date from 1815, but from this moment."

This was said to reassure Europe. He styled himself Napoleon the Third, the diplomatists were given to understand, not out of contempt for the dynasties recognized by the Powers, but out of respect for the memory of his cousin, the Duke of Reichstadt. Had he wished to proclaim the legal continuity of his uncle's dynasty, he would have had to count his uncle Joseph and his father as Napoleon the Third and Fourth. Strangely

enough, the first foreign State to acknowledge the new regime was the Bourbon kingdom of the Two Sicilies. To his old friend, Lord Malmesbury, it was reserved to announce in the House of Lords the decision of Her Majesty's government to recognize the French Empire.

The three remaining Great Powers held back. For a moment Frederick William of Prussia talked of a new crusade against the upstart Bonaparte. The other Emperors, though they had approved the President's usurpation of authority, did not relish admitting him to a footing with themselves. But they yielded with ill grace in January, the Czar saluting him, however, as his good friend, instead of brother. "Your court," replied Drouyn de Lhuys, tartly to the Russian ambassador, "is young to break with diplomatic tradition and to institute new forms."

Napoleon III made his official entry into Paris on his auspicious day, December 2nd, 1852. It was a lucky day for others, notably many political prisoners, long forgotten by the public but not overlooked by the new Cæsar. Notably, many if not most of the insurgents of 1848 and 1849 were set at liberty; which was merely consistent, since the new sovereign had succeeded where they had failed, in overthrowing the Republic. St. Arnaud, Magnan and Castellane received the marshal's baton; de Morny, who continued to sulk, got the grand cross of the Legion of Honour, and Walewski, who had followed his cousin's fortunes, was promoted to grand officer. Léon, the first Napoleon's other son, was anxious to follow his half-brother's example, and having once wanted to cut his "little cousin's" throat, announced himself as the most fervent of his partisans. The doors of the Tuileries remained closed to him, but the Emperor more than once came down handsomely and paid off his debts. Perhaps, among Louis Napoleon's former friends the preposterous Duke of Brunswick alone had grounds for complaint. Certainly, the Bonaparte had paid back the money he owed, but he never made any attempt to

restore the Duke to his dominions—indeed, such an attempt would have meant war with all Germany—and availing himself as an excuse of the Duke's repudiation in a newspaper previous to the *coup d'état*, of any sympathy with his imperialistic designs, he refused to receive him at court. Brunswick, however, continued to live prodigiously in Paris and was buried under a prodigious tomb at Geneva, to which city he bequeathed his still very considerable wealth. Napoleon's humbler supporters in adversity seem to have been well looked after; the pension of 4,800 francs allotted to Eleanor Gordon, in recognition of her share in the Strasbourg business, during the penurious period of the Presidency, might have been substantially increased, but she died within a year of the Prince's election.

So, at long last, the son of Hortense sat in the place of the god he had worshipped in childhood. Faith in his star and the magic of his name had put him there. Judged by his performances, he no more deserved his high dignity than any legitimate king who succeeds because he is the eldest son of his father, born in wedlock. The French people, electing him for entirely insufficient reasons, got a much better man than their silliness merited. The pity of it is, for him and for them, that they did not choose him ten or twentier years earlier. The filibuster of Strasbourg would have achieved more for humanity than this calm, cautious, disillusioned gentleman of forty-five. Virtue had gone out of him; the generous ardour had cooled. As is always the case with those who pursue power, he had almost forgotten the end in the means. When clothing himself in the purple he remembered to speak of his love for the suffering classes. That love was now less active than he was aware. It was as the champion of Law and Order that he had been acclaimed, and he had come almost to believe in the sufficiency of those fine words. Throwing himself on his bed for the first time as the Emperor Napoleon the Third, no doubt he said to himself, "Now

what can I do for this dear people—how can I make the world happier?" but upon these meditations would intrude visions of his own splendour and unrivalled good fortune, till in that glowing mirage those other painful and practical problems faded pleasantly away. . . .

THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

(From a portrait by P. de Pommaigran)

BOOK II

THE AUTOCRAT

I

It behoved him to marry and to marry soon. The Empire was established on an hereditary basis, but the only discernible heirs were Uncle Jerome and Cousin Nap. Both were highly unacceptable to the classes on which the new throne relied for support or, which, at any rate, were nearest to it. There was not, of course, much likelihood of the ex-King of Westphalia surviving his nephew. As to Prince Napoleon, he was disliked for his aggressive and vehement manner and still more for his Republican opinions and fanatical hatred of the Church. Such was the repugnance of the Senate to father and son that they had refused to designate them explicitly as next in succession, and had voiced through the mouth of M. Troplong their heartfelt wish to see before long a consort seated beside his imperial majesty on the throne of France.

The necessity of one day taking a constitutional wife must often have occurred to Louis Napoleon. But to marry while he was yet only chief magistrate of the Republic would be to repeat the domestic tragedy of his uncle and grandmother. The lady who might fit the Elysée might cut a poor figure at the Tuileries. But when the Tuileries was reached, Fleury took it upon himself to broach the subject to his master. He was

startled to find that Napoleon had already a match in view. The zealous aide-de-camp was despatched to Darmstadt, to solicit the hand of Princess Caroline of Vasa, a sort of Scotch cousin of the Beauharnais, and among the last survivors of the ancient royal house of Sweden. But, ostensibly because the girl was already as good as affianced to the Crown Prince of Saxony, and perhaps because a mere Prince President did not appear good enough for her, the offer was politely declined.

Fleury's errand was fruitless, but he was relieved by his sovereign's readiness to act upon his suggestion. The commandant had long formed one of the small and intimate circle which had formed about Miss Howard. To her house in the Rue du Cirque resorted Persigny and Edgard Ney, Toulongeon, de Béville and Mocquard. the Marquis of Hertford was another of her visitors, and occasionally Doctor Evans, an American dentist, looked in. There would be a little music and singing and more conversation. Napoleon himself sat there, listening with his lazy smile, smoking cigarettes, which he carried loose in his pocket, caressing his dog with one hand and perhaps their hostess's distinguished Angora cat with the other. He seemed thoroughly to enjoy the quiet domestic atmosphere. The attachment had now endured six years. Fleury and his friends considered the Englishwoman uneasily. With a son in the background, she could hardly be dreaming of a crown, but monarchs had contracted morganatic marriages before now. There was sufficient of the gentleman in the Prince to give his partisans grounds for alarm. They recalled an incident belonging to his early presidential days. Upon the occasion of his visiting Tours, accommodation was found for his mistress in the house of one André, then absent from home. Not long after, on his return to Paris, Napoleon was shown a letter received by one of his ministers, in which this man protested against the profanation of his hearth by the foot of a concubine.

Had the days of Louis Quinze returned, he demanded, that such an insult should be put upon a French citizen? The President took up the pen and wrote a stinging and manly rejoinder. How many married women a hundred times less pure, a hundred times less unselfish, a hundred times less excusable than the lady complained of, would have been received by M. André with all possible honour had their infidelities been covered by the name of a husband? "I detest," went on the chivalrous Prince, "this pedantic severity which thinly disguises a mean soul, indulgent towards itself and inexorable towards others." André was recommended to open his Bible at a passage concluding, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone." "As to myself, I avow I am guilty of having sought in an irregular association an affection of which I stand in need. My position has hitherto made it impossible for me to marry. Having passed, unhappily, most of my life in exile, in my own country I find neither the relations nor the friends of my childhood. I might, therefore, he pardoned an affection which harms no one and of which I make no parade. And I very much regret that a person of such pure disinterestedness and of so noble a character should have entered by accident a house which is governed by sham virtue devoid of Christian charity."

Unfortunately, Fleury ruefully reflected, Miss Howard since those days had shown a tendency to depart from the modest and discreet bearing which her lover extolled. At the reviews, for instance, she claimed a prominent place. When the Prince went to St. Cloud she insisted upon quarters being found for her on the ground floor. Not long after the *coup d'état* the aide-de-camp was horrified to see her, beautiful and superb, advancing up the ball-room of the Tuileries on the arm of Count Baciochi, and escorted by Col. de Béville and a kind of lady-in-waiting. Apparently she was no longer content to blush unseen in her own hotel or keep a tryst with her princely lover in the alleys of the Bois. Her Angora cat went

about in public with a green bow on his tail, attended by a lackey in a livery of the same colour. Green is the colour of jealousy. It would never do for the fierce light which beats upon a throne to discover behind it an English Pompadour or even a La Vallière.

That position she might have attained to and kept, had her lover followed the practice of most royal persons and contracted a marriage merely dictated by reasons of State. But at forty-five Louis Napoleon was no doubt very much surprised to find himself genuinely in love—more in love than he had ever been with his mistress. Terrifying rumours reached the Englishwoman. When the Prince returned from his tour in the south, two months prior to taking the imperial title, she was put off from joining him at St. Cloud. Her rival, she discovered, was a Spaniard, Mlle. Eugénie de Montijo, beautiful, oh, undoubtedly beautiful, alas, and only twenty-six years of age! She was the daughter of a Spanish noble who had embraced the cause of King Joseph as so few Spaniards did, and who had fought in the defence of Paris. She had hunted with Napoleon at Fontainebleau, she was going to hunt with him at Compiègne. "Another mistress," said Elizabeth Howard scornfully; but her spies advised her that the only way to the Spanish lady's bedroom would be through a church.

To de Morny at one time it must have seemed as unlikely that the new Emperor would marry this foreigner as that he would marry Miss Howard. He opened up negotiations through Walewski, for a marriage with Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe, one of the innumerable relations of Queen Victoria. The young lady was willing, but luckily for her the Queen vetoed the match. Luckily, for Napoleon III had already made up his mind to marry his Andalusian. "*Je suis pris!*" he told Fleury. For a reason, creditable or discreditable, he represented to Eugénie the risks she would run in becoming his wife—risks of assassination, risks of

dethronement, risks of exile, and so forth. That she was in love with him, as a young Englishwoman might conceivably have been, he did not suppose; he knew that Latin women of her station learn to love in marriage. It appeared that she had at least always been interested in him, that she had been thrilled by his exploits, and had long ago been converted to the Napoleonic cult by Stendhal, who used to frequent her mother's salon. Then, because he could not do without her, he asked for her hand through his cousin Mathilde—Mathilde whom he had once thought of marrying. The proposal was accepted.

It was not the alliance he had contemplated as he drew nearer to the throne. But, wiser than most monarchs, he refused to be defrauded of the greatest happiness that life can bestow. The joys of power and sovereignty, he reckoned, would soon pall if shared with some dull princess unable to love or to inspire love. He admitted that destiny had done much for him, and was not such a fool as to poison the foaming beaker of happiness which had been offered to his lips.

In this matter he did not invite counsel. On January 22nd he announced his forthcoming marriage to the Council of State and the representatives of the two chambers of parliament. As might have been expected, he spoke disparagingly of the usual royal alliances with foreign dynasties which very often subordinated national to family interests. With bad taste, rare in him, he referred scathingly to the Duke of Orleans' marriage with a German princess. "In the last reign the national self-respect was wounded by the spectacle of the heir to the throne knocking in vain at the doors of various royal houses and at last obtaining a princess, accomplished without doubt, but only of secondary rank and of an alien religion." At which Fleury, remembering that abortive journey to Darmstadt, must have winced.

"Having," the Emperor went on, "in the sight of Europe, been lifted by the force of a new principle to

the level of the ancient dynasties, he did not propose to go cap in hand, soliciting admission to the society of kings, but proudly took his stand, as a parvenu: "*titre glorieux lorsqu'on parvient par le libre suffrage d'un grand peuple.*" Then, seeming to eat his own words, he introduced his affianced bride as of noble birth, French by sympathies and education and by virtue of the blood which her father had shed in the cause of the Empire. It was all to the good that she was Spanish, since she would have in France no family covetous of honours and dignities. "I announce to France," concluded the Emperor, "that I have chosen a wife whom I love and respect rather than some unknown woman, an alliance with whom might have had advantages mingled with sacrifices. When you get to know my bride, gentlemen, you will be satisfied that this time, again, I have been directed by Providence.

Knowing both nations so well, Napoleon could not have been surprised to find that his choice appealed very much more to his late hosts than to his new subjects. The English people always applaud a love match. Old Greville pronounced the Emperor to be undoubtedly a gentleman. Lord John Russell, however, thought this marriage with an "intrigante" a dreadful lowering of the imperial dignity; and our ambassador, Lord Cowley, on this as on subsequent occasions, amused Downing Street by retailing all sorts of malicious tittle tattle about the bride.* The position of imperial mistress, many of the French thought, should have satisfied the Spanish woman. And the nation generally, in the first flush of imperialistic fervour, did not like to hear its sovereign call himself a parvenu. The countryfolk had rather expected to see the kings of Europe thrusting their daughters upon the acceptance of their mighty Emperor. Some of them, indeed, shouted, "Vive Marie-Louise!" in the course of one of her progresses, as

* "The Paris Embassy: Selections from the Papers of the first Earl Cowley." London, 1928.

others, stupider still, had said, "Voilà le vieux revenu!" when they first heard Louis Napoleon's name.

The bridegroom's few relatives were no more cordial than the bridegroom's relatives usually are towards the bride. Mathilde must have had some bitter moments, and not improbably gave her father, Jerome, an unpleasant quarter of an hour. The Duchess of Hamilton was dissuaded with difficulty by the Austrian ambassador from making a scene upon her presentation to Eugénie. And though the young Spaniard had refused to allow the city of Paris to spend six hundred thousand francs upon a wedding gift and had insisted upon the sum being devoted, instead, to charity, the people on the day of her marriage at Notre Dame (January 30th, 1853), eyed her more with curiosity than cordiality. The majority, we are told, were content to admire her loveliness; others at the sight of such marvellous good fortune could not refrain from envy; while a few shook their heads and questioned whether so much happiness would not have to be paid for in the long run. The Emperor that night appeared to Hübner the embodiment of supreme human felicity. "He is intoxicated with love and happiness," wrote his excellency. "I should not have believed it possible that a man of his years and experience could be so simply and deeply in love."

Where at this moment was Elizabeth Howard? According to one account, not less credible than half a dozen others, she had been beguiled into making a journey to England and charged with a mission to recover some letters highly compromising to her late lover from one of their former associates. Napoleon, in his native kindness of heart, would be sure to have contrived some means of softening the blow. When a man has no more love to offer a woman, he generally offers her money; and money he did not stint. He bestowed altogether on his mistress the enormous sum of 5,449,000 francs—about £218,000 in English money.

A great part of this was shown in the imperial cash-book as having gone to redeem a mortgage on the domain of Civita Nova in the March of Ancona, a property which had been bequeathed to Louis Napoleon by his father and been mortgaged, in fact, not to Miss Howard, but to the Marchese Pallavicino in 1848 for £13,000. On this fictitious entry was founded, presumably, the manifestly absurd legend that "the gay lady" of Oxford Street financed the Prince in his attempt upon the throne of France.

There were some hitches about the final payments, and letters passed between her and Mocquard—letters betraying not more than a decent anxiety on her part, and illuminated by references to him "by whom she was once so tenderly beloved." She had loved him, too; though perhaps at the very beginning it was the glamour of his name that attracted her towards the silent short-legged foreigner who only looked well on horseback; and after six years, her love, like his, may have worn thin. At any rate, as early as May 1854 she married at Florence an Englishman named Clarence Trelawney, the cadet of a well-known Cornish family and a major in the Austrian service. If she divorced her husband, as is alleged, shortly before her death, she must have acquired a domicile outside France, for divorce, abolished in that country by the Bourbons, had not been re-introduced into the civil code. Yet she was often seen driving along the Champs Elysées, staring insolently, it is said, at the Empress, but always politely acknowledged by the Emperor. He had created her Countess of Beauregard, the name being taken from the fine estate not far from Paris which she had made her home. She was on good terms with the local *curé*, by whom she seems to have been persuaded to forsake the Church of her fathers. But when she died at the age of forty-three, in 1865, her body was taken back to the land of her birth for burial. Napoleon, never forgetful of old friendships, ennobled her son, Martin, as Comte de

Béchevet, and through him, in course of time, much of Miss Howard's wealth found its way to England.

The woman whom Napoleon married, whatever she became in the long after years of exile, was, in the flower of her womanhood, very much a Spaniard. In old age she described herself as being essentially and fundamentally a Catholic—"it was in her blood"—but while she accepted the teachings of her Church as the absolute laws of her being, she was not noticeably devout, and rather avoided the society of the clergy. She had all her nation's liking for a chivalrous gesture, and would pursue a magnanimous course with genuine relish. She was charitable and generous, rather than soft-hearted, her compassion not extending beyond the narrow bounds indicated by her religion and not recoiling from the beastliness of the bull-fight and the chase. Yet she was sentimental, and cherished a particular cult for Marie Antoinette. Opinions, ideas and ideals, at the beginning, she had none. She had been trained by the nuns of the Sacré Cœur to be the wife of a great noble and to bring up his children. The French, exacting in this respect, do not think she was well educated; but she never was a fool.

Napoleon chose wisely. The marriage, on the whole, was a happy one. The pair remained lovers longer than do most royal couples. Eugénie was seen kissing the hand with which her husband caressed her. And when the passion that entered so largely into his love at first had cooled there remained a genuine liking and friendship. A reformed rake, it is said, makes the best husband. Napoleon continued to be a fond and sympathetic husband, but he continued to be a rake. Eugénie does not seem to have been greatly surprised or profoundly shocked by the discovery of his infidelities. Men, she knew, were always like that, especially princes. The Latin woman accepts life frankly and acknowledges man to be the master. After all, she was the mother of his son and heir, the boy born in March 1856, on

whom the hopes of the dynasty depended, who was to fix the wandering fancy of the French people. Eugénie remembered the day of her son's baptism as the happiest of her life.

She had, in fact, nothing to fear from the competition of other women. She was his Empress, his wife; and her husband rated her as highly above his mistresses and concubines as he rated her child above the two sons he had by the girl at Ham—sons whom he refused to see, though he gave them money and titles. The other women were to him mere vehicles of pleasure. But if for a moment, when he first met Eugénie, he had harboured some romantic conception of love, it vanished early. He was apt to pick up a novel and, reading aloud, hold up the love-passages to the derision of his courtiers. There was no savour of romance about any of the many amours with which he has been debited by history or rumour. The beautiful Italian, Countess Castiglione, "whose breasts seemed to throw a challenge at all other women," first excited his desire within a few months of his son's birth, and at the end of three years returned to Turin, having ceased to please. Another woman, nearly as beautiful, and with the decisive advantage of novelty, had supplanted her. With this mistress, a married woman, he remained on friendly terms to the end. Indeed, like our Charles II, he was always grateful to his women for the pleasure they had procured him. He despised them no more than he despised himself, retained always a kindly memory of them, and left not one of them, if the scandalmongers are to be believed, any cause to regret his acquaintance. Only towards the end of his reign does one of these adulteries appear to have aroused his wife's active resentment. The cause was a girl of the people named Marguérite Bellanger, who had a child which may or may not have been the Emperor's, but for which he made provision in life. The Empress heard of her, and it fell to M. Devienne, President of the Supreme Court, in his judicial capacity, to

intervene as conciliator between the Sovereign and his consort. In this business his ermine became muddied not a little; but, charged by the succeeding Republican government with unbecoming conduct, he was able to clear himself before a disciplinary council of his colleagues.

Napoleon and Eugénie presided over a licentious court, and from the court all Paris took its tone. "I don't despise men, but I do flatter myself I know them," more than once declared the Emperor. He knew very well the vast majority of his subjects would not blame him for enjoying every pleasure within his reach. They would have reckoned him a fool if he had done otherwise. French decorum was respected. The imperial court was organized with elaborate state. The people were dazzled by their Sovereign's splendour. Expenditure on dress, appointments, ceremonial and entertainments was lavish. The Emperor had now over a million pounds a year to spend. Realizing that he was considerably more than halfway through life, he tried hard to get all the fun he could out of it. There were costume balls, the Empress herself on one occasion appearing as Diana the Huntress, which gave other ladies of the court opportunities, denied by the current fashions, of exhibiting their fine shapes. For the same reason, it may be suspected, that otherwise dull entertainment, the charade, was popular. Like the dancing courts of Gruyère of joyous memory, the Emperor would dance the *boulangère* upon the greensward and lead his guests, linked hand in hand, in and out of the tumbled ruins of Pierrefonds. Mérimée once returned breathless to tell Senior of a mimic battle between the Empress and her ladies, holding the crest of a slope, and the Emperor and his gentlemen who scrambled up it on all fours, to drag the screaming defenders down. The romantic writer was gratified by the sight of the women's feet, which, he observed wistfully, one seldom saw nowadays. (Here the discreet recorder of conversations with the eminent

may be suspected of substituting the word *feet* for the un-Victorian *legs*.)

Indoors, there was private and impromptu dancing to music churned out of a barrel-organ by Baciochi. "I prefer this accompaniment," said the Emperor, "to musicians who talk about what they have seen or haven't seen." Nor were wits and men of letters often among his guests. Napoleon did not shine in conversation, and seldom made a joke; he hated discussion; and in spite of his desperate attempts to amuse himself, yawned more often than he spoke. Therefore he was all the more eager to investigate the conditions of the spirit world with which a Scotch medium, named Dunglas Home, offered to put him in communication. A craze for table-turning and spiritualistic *séances* possessed the court and society. The spirits of Queen Hortense and the first Napoleon were invoked. It does not appear that the Emperor positively identified his mother, and the messages of his illustrious uncle must have satisfied him that a noticeable intellectual degeneration takes place after death.

Unfortunately, these harmless recreations alternated with those organized butcheries in which royal personages take peculiar delight. Clad as for a pageant, the delicate ladies of the court looked on while a stag was pulled down by the hounds and had its throat cut. Sometimes they were disappointed because the animal preferred to drown himself in a pond. On one occasion, at least, the gallant beast turned on his wretched pursuers, but was unfortunately shot before he could destroy any of them. Only of Persigny's young and flighty spouse is it recorded that she had the grace to weep while the stag's blood was bubbling over the grass.

Deep in the corner of his eye, Napoleon may also have held back a tear. For he had wept at the death of a favourite dog and, assisting at a bull-fight at Biarritz, he was observed to avert his gaze every time a bull or

horse was mangled.* Though a good shot, he told an English nobleman that he did not much care for the pastime of shooting. But to confess to any tenderness for animal life would have exposed him to the ridicule of his own subjects; and to have forsworn the gory delights of the chase would have proclaimed him before those born (appropriately) in the purple, to be indeed the parvenu he had in a great moment declared himself to be. He had been hurt by the Czar's refusal to address him as "dear brother"—he had been hurt when a petty German princeling visited Paris without paying his respects to him. There had been much of the snob in the first Napoleon; there was some of it in the Third. "March," said the prisoner of Ham to the sovereigns, "in the forefront of humanity's ideas. . . " Instead—he rode in the rear of the hounds!

II

In those golden fifties it seemed, no doubt, to the Fortunate Despot that the happiness of his court reflected the happiness of the country. Never, indeed, had France appeared so prosperous. Trade was booming. The Sovereign told his courtiers to live splendidly and to spend freely. Paris had become the metropolis of the world. It attracted all those who had money to spend on pleasure, and it particularly attracted those who minister to the grosser pleasures. Beneath the glitter and veneer of the Empire the material prosperity of Louis Philip's reign endured. Money circulated freely. Fortunes were

* Filon says that upon his marriage the Emperor was inclined to approve a proposal to introduce bull-fights into France, as a compliment to the Empress, because they might make courage fashionable; but this was before he had himself seen one. The Empress disapproved the idea *because in Paris a bull-fight might give scandal or turn out to be a fiasco.*

made and not always lost in a single day on the Bourse. Enterprises like the Crédit Mobilier paid a forty per cent. dividend. Gold was to be picked up in Paris almost as easily as on the goldfields of California or Australia. The days of Law and the South Sea Bubble seemed at one moment to have returned. Napoleon, with a shrewd eye for the real interests of the nation, took alarm and publicly discountenanced gambling and over-speculation. Already his able and trustworthy minister, Morny, had soiled his hands with discreditable financial transactions.

This prosperity was not confined to the bourgeoisie. The rapid extension of the railways and the rebuilding of the capital under the brilliant direction of Haussmann gave employment to thousands. Wages ruled high, and many shopkeepers found that expropriation was as short a cut as bankruptcy to fortune. The peasantry, who formed two-thirds of the population of France, were contented and well off. There were whole districts where you could not find a single family in want, and one of Senior's friends could only point to three or four really poor persons in his commune.

This being so, it seems strange that Napoleon should have taken such pains to protect his throne and to suppress political liberty. He, the rebel of Strasbourg and Boulogne, the persistent conspirer against Louis Philip, proposed to make any attempt to change the system of government a capital offence. But this measure, even the *Corps législatif*, trained in docility and humility, refused to pass. It was a bad time for journalists. The Emperor had a profound distrust of the Press. Instead of trying to capture it by a judicious bestowal of titles and rewards on newspaper proprietors—a system which in other countries had made the Press the stoutest bulwark of royalty—he made it practically impossible for any but the chosen government organs to live. Those few exceptions, of course, waxed strong and wealthy. Parliamentary liberties fared no better. Thanks to the enormous

powers wielded by the préfets at the general election of 1857, only five opposition members were returned; and the election of those five was something after the nature of a miracle.

Why should the country want a change?—had he not fulfilled all his promises?—the Despot might have said. Certainly, in these first few years of his reign he did as much practical good as the majority of the nation would have approved—a prosperous people is not usually over-anxious about the wrongs of individuals or minorities. Napoleon knew this, and though his powers according to his own constitution were so vast, he had not always the courage to obey the impulses of his heart. There were so many things, as it seems to us, that he might have done—so many abuses to be corrected, so many injustices to be removed. The civil and criminal codes called then (as now to a less extent) for revision and amplification. Civil death, as a penalty, he did abolish—at a much later date he conferred on the workers a limited right of association, which had been denied them by the founders of the Revolution. In the matter of bail and police procedure he assimilated French law in some degree to the English practice. The rigours of military "justice" were to some extent abated, but remained excessive. Of the most glaring defects of social law the Emperor seemed unconscious. He did nothing, for instance, to relieve women of their heavy disabilities, nothing for illegitimate children, who must have constituted a considerable proportion of his subjects. He left it to those who succeeded him to wipe from the code the most inhuman article ever devised by a legislator —that which forbade a woman ever to appeal to the compassion of the father of her illegitimate child. The first Emperor, among innumerable other silly things, said that the State had no interest whatever in illegitimate children; but a thinker such as his nephew pretended to be should have recognized the danger of creating a whole population of outcasts. Himself the grandson

of Josephine and owning lip-service to the Catholic Church, he could not be expected to reintroduce divorce, though his long and wide experience as a man of the world should have convinced him of its necessity. Any extension of the Loi Gramont, passed by the Assembly in 1850, which to this day forbids under trifling penalties only *public* cruelty to animals, he would probably have dismissed as impracticable. France still lags far behind the non-Latin countries in humane legislation. She cannot reproach Napoleon III for having jockeyed her too vigorously along the path of real civilization.

"My government," he lived to say, "is strangely composed. The Empress is a legitimist." (He alluded, it may be supposed, to her sentimental reverence for Marie Antoinette.) "Prince Napoleon is a Republican. Morny is an Orleanist. I am a Socialist. The only Imperialist among us is Persigny, and he is more or less mad." The old-fashioned diplomatists called this very moderate reformer a Socialist also, and perhaps he believed he was. In his written works some germs of a Socialist State are to be discovered. But he made no attempt to alter the main texture of the social fabric, even by the partial expedients (death duties and the like) so common nowadays. The disciples of Auguste Comte approved his rule; no Socialist of to-day would hail him as a brother. He did something for the better housing of the working class, founded savings-banks and agricultural colonies. Notwithstanding, the aims of this middle-aged utopian were well summed up by Prince Albert when he wrote, "Louis Napoleon wishes for peace, enjoyment, and cheap corn."

That he did sincerely desire peace, Europe generally found it hard to believe. The first Napoleon had perished by the sword, and it was expected the second would live by it. It was in defiance of the treaties of 1815 that the Napoleonic dynasty had reappeared, and France having braved so much, might try to recover her revo-

lutionary boundaries. Leopold of Belgium was sure that Napoleon III intended to make a mouthful of his kingdom. The English Press warned the English people to be on their guard lest the nephew should seek to avenge the defeat of the uncle. Had not the prisoner of Ham written: "There has never been a government sufficiently strong to stifle liberty at home without winning glory abroad?" Whether he had believed that or not, there were still friends and foes in plenty to insist that the Empire could only be consolidated by a successful war. But he certainly showed no eagerness to seize his opportunity when his ambassador at Constantinople called his attention to the grave developments of the dispute which had arisen between Turkey and Russia over the control of the shrines in Palestine.

The question was not one to arouse any martial ardour among the French. They bore no grudge against Russia for treating them so rudely in 1812, and though Catholicism had become fashionable again, Jacques Bonhomme had not the least disposition to turn crusader on behalf of the Latin pilgrims to Jerusalem. But as the Czar adopted a more and more imperious tone towards the patient procrastinating Porte and the drift of Russia's pretensions became clearer, the Emperor began to wonder whether he had not here a chance of cheaply acquiring prestige. No doubt Nicholas's refusal to call him brother rankled a little. It must have tickled him to see the pedantic upholder of the Vienna tradition putting himself in the wrong. A breach in the Waterloo alliances was imminent. The temptation to France to have her revenge was indeed so obvious that Drouyn de Lhuys, his Foreign Minister, judged it more decent for her to efface herself and gain the good-will of Europe by contrast with rather than opposition to the disturber of the peace. Napoleon being after all no captain, as he must often have ruefully reflected, might not incredibly have been swayed towards this pusillanimous policy but for Persigny. The One Imperialist in the

administration urged him to come forward as the defender of the threatened Ottoman Empire. "You have only to lead," maintained the Count, "and England will follow. In that country the old aristocrats of 1815 may still cherish some prejudice against the house of Bonaparte; but it is the middle classes who now control affairs, and they will never tolerate Russia taking Constantinople."

The bolder course was adopted. The French fleet was ordered to sail from Toulon to Greek waters, there to await events. For a moment it seemed that Persigny was wrong. Lord Aberdeen, then at the head of affairs in England, objected to being hustled, and Napoleon found himself offering excuses to Lord Cowley, the British ambassador. Hearing this, his own ambassador at London, Walewski, a strong pro-Russian, observed to Lord Clarendon how necessary it was always to get at the Emperor personally and not through his ministers. No one had better reason than Walewski himself in the years that followed to appreciate the value of this advice. In the game of high international politics on which the Emperor was now entering he preferred to play his own hand. He had no one about him whose diplomatic experience commanded any confidence; still less, he knew, had they any confidence in the ideals which, sometimes in spite of himself, dictated his policy. That which was the finer part of him inspired most distrust and aversion in his counsellors and partisans.

It was a bloodless victory at which he aimed—a triumph of diplomacy which should make him appear the conservator of the peace of Europe and a welcome member of the concert of kings. He tried to talk over the Czar; but Nicholas did not think he meant to fight, and for that reason made no show of yielding. Lord Aberdeen did not want to fight either. Britain was carried into the war by her masterful ambassador at Pera. The negotiations dragged on all through the year 1853. So patiently did the Emperor pursue peace that many people

in England suspected him of bad faith and of really favouring Russia. Had the two Central Powers come in on the side of the new allies, the Czar must certainly have given way. Knowing that Austria could not move for fear of Prussia, Napoleon tried to buy off the northern kingdom by vague hints of territorial compensation. King Frederick William rejected the parvenu's overtures with disdain. He would be no party, he declared, to an incestuous alliance with paganism and the Revolution.

War was declared by France and England at the end of March, 1854—within eighteen months of the Prince President's pacific declaration at Bordeaux. That declaration had been made to reassure the Powers—Britain among them; and now Britain was much more reassured on finding herself and France companions-in-arms. It was an unequal yoke. France contributed far the larger proportion of troops and sustained the heavier losses; for which reason, and perhaps because the British soldiers were poor devils of mercenaries and not drawn from every class of the population, the Crimean War excited decidedly more enthusiasm on this side of the Channel than the other. The British fleet did not reveal the Nelson touch; the French were, in secret, probably glad it did not.

Napoleon had in view yet another ally. In March 1852 he had expressed to his friend Arese, now domiciled at Turin, the wish one day to entertain King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia in Paris. Now Drouyn de Lhuys, no doubt at his master's behest, discussed the Eastern question with the Sardinian minister, and prophesied as a result of the war a general reconstruction of Europe, by which France's allies might hope to benefit. England, desperately short of man-power, followed up the hint at Turin by urging Sardinia to take her place beside the allies and so win for herself the good-will of Europe which Austria by her timidity was like to forfeit. Cavour, Victor Emmanuel's minister, as far seeing as

Napoleon, considered; Russia anticipated his decision by declaring war against Sardinia; and a Sardinian corps was sent to reinforce the allies in the Crimea. "What am I expected to do there?" asked La Marmora, the commander. Cavour left that to him. He had made Sardinia a factor in the European situation, and established, as he hoped, a claim on the gratitude of the monarch who had once flaunted the Italian tricolour.

Napoleon was well content. He had a more selfish reason for gratification in the intimacy which by means of the alliance he had established with the English royalties. In September 1854 Prince Albert came over to see him at Boulogne—where, as was pointed out, a French army had been assembled for the invasion of England fifty years before. No two men could have differed more widely in temperament, but they got on well together, and sized each other up pretty correctly. The Emperor was surprised that his guest did not smoke, and in his heart of hearts probably thought him a bit of a milksop. But he had himself been brought up in Germany, and the only princes he had known outside his own family were German. Albert rather presumptuously criticized his manner of handling his troops. He decided the Emperor was really benevolent and anxious for the good of his people, but, "like all rulers before him," with a poor opinion of that people's political capacity. The name of Albert's cousin, the King-Consort of Portugal cropped up. Napoleon gave expression to his dominant idea by saying that Spain and Portugal ought to be united under one crown. He wanted to see Lombardy freed from Austria and Poland resurrected. Wiser than the Prince, he foresaw the danger to his country of a united Germany, but would not object to a German State from which Austria and Prussia were excluded. "He seems very much attached to the Empress," concluded Albert, knowing that this would prepossess Victoria in her ally's favour.

It was fortunate for the alliance that so good an under-

standing had been created at Boulogne. Napoleon had soon good reason to complain of the management of the war by the English cabinet; complaints which were echoed in England and which forced Aberdeen and his colleagues out of office. While the Queen was hesitating whom she should send for next, Walewski wrote to the Prince, observing that it was essential in the interests of the alliance that Lords Clarendon and Palmerston should take office. Presumably the ambassador did not venture on so bold a course without instructions from his master. Victoria was naturally indignant at this attempt on the part of a foreign sovereign, even though he was an ally, to dictate the composition of her cabinet; but she gave way. This was not the first nor the last time that Britain submitted to the dictates of France. Her Majesty even swallowed her resentment when Palmerston sent her the copy of a letter he had sent to the Emperor, thanking him for his confidence and saying that he would at all times be pleased to hear his views, communicated directly. "The British ambassador," said the Queen, very properly, "is the channel of communication between the two governments."

Napoleon saw that the two courts were drifting apart. He resolved on a personal effort to bridge the gulf. Availing himself of a vaguely worded invitation let drop by Albert at Boulogne, he went over with his wife to visit the Queen in April 1855. They were enthusiastically greeted by the English people, and Victoria took the young Empress to her heart at once. She took a warm liking to the Emperor also, though she half suspected, and rightly, that she did not altogether understand him. They discussed the war, the slow and doubtful progress of which was a sore disappointment to both. Neither St. Arnaud, the French commander-in-chief, nor Lord Raglan, the British commander, had fulfilled expectations; though this was not for want of advice sent them by the Emperor's special envoys. He had his own plan, which was not a bad one, for isolating Sebas-

topol. Persuaded that he could do better than his general, he had written in February to Palmerston, announcing that he was going out to assume the supreme command himself. This project was quite to the taste of Eugénie, who fancied it would strengthen her husband's hold on the people's imagination; but everyone else cried out in alarm. The Emperor had given no proof of military capacity. If he failed, he would be disgraced in the eyes of France. While he was abroad his throne would be shaken down. "If he goes, let him take Prince Napoleon with him," they cried: "or lock him up in Vincennes," suggested others. Persigny, whose destiny it was to disagree with the Empress, called on Lord Malmesbury to help drive the idea out of his master's head. The prestige, too, of the British commander was to be considered. In those days, it was thought that our troops would not submit to be commanded by a foreigner. And now the Queen profited by the Emperor's visit to add a word or two of dissuasion. "Capital!" exclaimed Marshal Vaillant. "Continue to dissuade him. We are all in the same boat."

The visit passed off "like a wonderful dream," as Queen Victoria, according to an unfailing habit, phrased it. The imperial couple returned to Paris, having won the favour of the English people, and delighted with the great little lady. From intimate contact with her, no doubt, Napoleon derived a new and agreeable sense of complete respectability. He put aside, too, all thought of going to the Crimea. "Those about me have no pluck,' he complained; but their caution seemed justified when shortly after his return to Paris an Italian tried to kill him as he rode along the Champs Elysées. He realized now that though he had gagged France's mouth securely there were men abroad who hated him and would risk their lives to pull him down. Pianori,* the would-be assassin, it is true, was not a Frenchman, but a Roman who sought to avenge the subversion of the Roman Republic. There was positive official evidence that he

PRINCE NAPOLEON

("Plon Plon")

was, or had been, insane. He was guillotined; all the same Napoleon should have remembered he was threatened with a like fate by the Austrians when he was fighting under the same colours as Pianori; but life was very pleasant just now, and he was not inclined to forgive those who wished to deprive him of it.

Sebastopol continued not to fall. French soldiers complained of France's enjoying herself while they froze and starved in the trenches. Napoleon, borrowing the idea from Albert, entertained the public with another of the long series of nineteenth-century exhibitions. Victoria and Albert and certain of their children came over in August, and all passed off as delightfully as at Windsor. The Emperor drove young Albert Edward round Paris in a curricle. On this occasion Count Bismarck, the Prussian delegate to the German Diet, was presented to Their Majesties. Napoleon escorted his guests back as far as Boulogne and left them more pleased with him than ever.

Sebastopol fell on September 10th, 1855. France was heartily sick of the war, and Napoleon was in a hurry to finish it. Though Pélissier the new French commander had refused to be guided by orders from the Tuileries, His Majesty was now busy with a scheme for forcing the Russians to evacuate the whole peninsula. But a further campaign was unnecessary. The Czar Nicholas was dead, and his successor lent an ear to peace proposals. Queen Victoria thought the peace premature. A protocol, signed at Vienna on February 1st, put an end to the fighting and prepared the ground for a Peace Congress at Paris.

The Crimean War has been almost forgotten in France. It was futile; the policy by which ostensibly it was dictated proved stupid and short-sighted; it was the vanquished who gained his ends. But those who took part in it came out of it with clean hands. It was a soldiers' war, conducted chivalrously throughout. Apart from some ill-founded stories in London about Russian "atrocities," the combatants disdained to insult or

slander each other. There was no "propaganda." In pauses between the fighting French and British officers exchanged jokes with the Russians. The laurels of Balaklava went unsullied. Behind the lines no one thought of robbing "enemy" governesses of their savings in the post-office or of tying up nurses, or indeed, any women, to posts and shooting them. When the Russian peace delegation reached Paris it was received, not with howls and brickbats according to the new etiquette, but with stately courtesy. The Crimean War belongs to a generation which it is the fashion of the moment to deride. At least, there was nothing blackguardly about it.

III

To the majority of those taking part in it, the Congress of Paris was just another of those conferences whereat the Powers of Europe bargained territory and set limits to each other's greed, according to no other general principle than the balance of power. To Napoleon III it was much more than that. It represented the triumph of the Bonapartes and of the principle of national sovereignty—the answer to and the undoing of that other Congress of Vienna, by which the outlawry of his race had been decreed. It was seen now how little he had cared about the quarrel itself. "When will you grant us peace?" he had said with a charming courtesy to the Russian delegate. "It is you, sire, that I come to ask for it," was the equally gracious reply. From that moment it was obvious that the Emperor favoured his late antagonist in the lists of Sebastopol more than the over-cautious Austria, whose attitude, notwithstanding, had helped to bring the Czar to reason. Against the wish of Prince Albert, who had reasonably argued that only those who had joined in the hunt should be consulted as to the distribution of the spoils, Prussia was given a

seat at the council board. It was a general discussion of the affairs of Europe that Napoleon wanted to provoke—a design by no means agreeable to Walewski, who presided. The war had been ostensibly undertaken for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, but when the treaty was signed with an eagle's feather on March 30th, 1856, the unfortunate Turk had to recognize the autonomy of two of his finest provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia. (Turkey has generally had to pay more in solicitor's fees than the worth of the cause in dispute). The Emperor's sympathies had been roused by his foster sister, Mme. Cornu, for Rumania, that backwater of the Latin world. He wanted to constitute it into one united State. This project, successfully combated by the diplomatists, was realized a year or two later by the provinces electing the same man as ruler.

"The treaty," said Napoleon, "is honourable to everyone and humiliating to none." It had earned for him the good graces of Europe and stabilized his throne. But it was a characteristic of the man that he was never entirely satisfied with a result which only profited him personally. The Congress had not fulfilled the hopes he had built upon it. There remained—Italy. He was haunted by a queer sense of responsibility towards that country—a legacy from his youth. The unwilling Walewski was ordered to afford Count Cavour an opportunity of raising the Italian question when the terms of the actual treaty had been settled. For what other reason had Sardinia joined in the war? The Emperor had had a talk with Victor Emmanuel in Paris, the previous winter, and had told Cavour to let Walewski know, in a confidential statement, what he wanted done for Italy. The great Sardinian's demands were not excessive. Austria was to treat the Lombards and Venetians more kindly, and the Duke of Modena was to cede his States to Sardinia in exchange for the Pope's Legations. But he failed to get even this modest programme discussed at Paris, though Napoleon had tried to facilitate his

plan by proposing the Duke of Modena as Sovereign for Rumania; and Lord Clarendon, the English delegate, surpassed even the Italians themselves in denunciations of Papal misgovernment and in expressions of sympathy for the Italian people. "Everyone is satisfied with the result of the conference," chuckled the Austrian ambassador, "except M. de Cavour." His Excellency little dreamed that Cavour, on parting with the Emperor, had been assured of his dislike of Austria and comforted with the words: "Though I cannot break with her at the present moment, I have a presentiment that the peace will not last long."

Cavour returned to Turin, in fact, fairly hopeful; and Francis Joseph thought it worth while to humour the Western Powers by appointing his brother, the Archduke Maximilian, viceroy of his Italian provinces, with a relatively free hand to introduce a mild regime. The Archduke had visited Napoleon in Paris a year previous to his marriage with Leopold of Belgium's daughter, and cemented the friendly feeling generated between them by setting up a bust of the uncle in the public gardens of Milan. A graceful little act like that, the Jewish banker Fould told Hübner, went a long way with Napoleon III. "You must forgive him," he added, "his funny Italian sympathies. They are a relic of his youthful days. He will soon grow out of them."

They seemed to lie dormant, at least the next eighteen months. Feeling that he had given Italy, or rather Piedmont, her chance, the Emperor busied himself about many things. The friendship with Victoria and Albert had to be warmed up by a visit to Osborne. Albert catechized his guest and lamented his leaning towards their late enemy. He was well aware, he said, that the Emperor was going to meet the Czar, and out of his intimate knowledge of the northern courts warned him that anything he said to Alexander would certainly be repeated to Their Majesties of Austria and Prussia. Napoleon still harped on the subject of the Vienna

treaties, and was at no pains to conceal his dislike and distrust of Austria. At the same time he gave it as his opinion that the Powers might find a more profitable outlet for their energies by colonizing Africa than in trying to score off each other in Europe. Speculatively he allotted Morocco to Spain, a part of Tripoli to Sardinia, Egypt to England, and a part of Syria to Austria. The Prince, a statesman of the old school, thought all this chimerical, and also dismissed the possibility of Prussia ever becoming a naval rival of England. Nor would he agree with the Emperor that a strong Rumania might be a barrier against Russia. Neither lived long enough to find out which was right.

The interview with Czar Alexander took place at Stuttgart in the following September. Napoleon had a reason which Albert knew not of for counting on the Czar's good-will. France, Britain and Austria had concluded a secret pact, supplementary to the treaty of Paris, establishing the measures ("sanctions" as would now be said) to be taken by the allies in case Russia should not keep her engagements. Napoleon had bound himself to nothing definite; and he told his wife, whom he now constantly employed in this way and on such occasions, to let the Russian ambassador know about it. Apparently this procedure did not earn the autocrat's respect. Eugénie proposed to accompany her husband to Stuttgart, but the Czarina avoided meeting her by postponing her own departure from Petersburg till it was too late for the Empress to make the necessary arrangements. From Stuttgart Napoleon carried back to Paris only a vague assurance that Russia had not forgiven Austria and would remain neutral if France were to attack her in Italy.

The imperial parvenu had got used to the society of royalty by this time, but these interviews no doubt flattered his sense of importance and helped to reassure him as to the future of his little son. He had done, as it seemed to him, so well by France that he was shocked

and indignant on learning at Plombières that the general election had resulted in the return of no fewer than five deputies pledged to oppose his government—and this, too, when he and Eugénie had displayed in the most public manner their sorrow at the death of that quasi-liberal poet, Béranger. This evidence of popular ingratitude came hard upon the discovery of a plot hatched against the Emperor's life by three Italians, named Bertolotti, Tibaldi, and Grilli, with the connivance it was alleged, but never proved, of the exiled republican, Ledru-Rollin. While still turning a cold shoulder towards Austria, His Majesty found that his revolutionary ardour had distinctly cooled.

In the afternoon of January 14th, 1858, the Emperor was driving past the statue of Henry IV, in company with a visitor, Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, Albert's brother. Thinking of the King's end, he remarked, "For myself, I fear only the dagger, with which Ravaillac was armed —in all other cases the criminal is always hoping to save himself by flight; and that very preoccupation paralyses his arm." The same evening as the imperial carriage, preceded by an escort of lancers, approached the Opera house in the Rue le Peletier a terrific explosion was heard. The carriage was wrecked. Napoleon and Eugénie sprang out and ran up the steps. The gas lamps outside the building had been extinguished. In the darkness, horses and men were screaming and writhing in their death agonies. Eugénie did not for an instant lose her nerve. Napoleon was trembling and seemed for a moment on the verge of collapse. He recovered himself quickly, and with his wife showed himself in the imperial box. The audience realizing that they had so narrowly escaped assassination, rose and cheered them to the echo. The performance—"William Tell"—continued. In the interior of his box the Emperor, still shaken and excited, rebuked the prefect of police, who had been summoned from a dinner party. "Your police," cried the Sovereign, "serve to embarrass me, but not to protect me." That

night, he knelt by the cot of his infant son and shed tears.

Three bombs had been thrown. A hundred and fifty-six persons had been wounded, of whom eight died. The number of horses killed is not stated. Thanks rather to chance than to their own intelligence, the police before morning had laid hands on the murderers. They were, like the authors of the previous attempts, Italians—Orsini, Pieri, di Rudio and Gomez by name. It was soon elicited that the two last were subordinates, and that Orsini was the chief. Perceiving he was doomed, he avowed his responsibility. Like Pianori, he was a native of the Papal States, and, like his intended victim, had fought against papal authority. His life had been devoted to the cause of Italian nationality. He had been condemned to death by the Austrians, had escaped, and taken refuge in London. There, in concert with a French exile named Bernard, he had resolved to assassinate the French Emperor. Why? Because, so he is stated to have declared to the examining magistrate, the Emperor's death would certainly bring about a revolution in France, and that would be the surest means of provoking a revolution in Italy.

Almost certainly he said more than that. Revolution in Italy would have been more easily and directly provoked by the assassination of the Pope, the King of the Two Sicilies, or the Austrian Emperor. Reading the magistrate's report, in his study in the Tuileries, Napoleon probably found a good deal to make him wince. He would undoubtedly have been reminded that while the Austrians occupied the Legations, his—the French—troops were garrisoning Rome, and that he, Napoleon Bonaparte, by upholding the Pope's government, had betrayed the very cause for which he and his dead brother had fought in '31. It is unlikely that the one-time revolutionary had ever taken the carbonari's oath—if he had, Mazzini, in the terrible indictment he launched against him that very year from a free London

Press, would have mentioned that among his other perjuries; but Napoleon, the Emperor, now fifty years of age, brooding over the assassin's denunciations, must have seen himself, a young man, riding down the vale of Tiber, wrapt in a tricoloured scarf, must have seen himself hurrying away from his brother's deathbed, an Italian insurgent and a fugitive before the Austrian. Not because he had broken his pledge to the French Republic, but because he had deserted the standards of his youth, his life was forfeit. The French might forgive, the Italians never.

But to those around the Emperor, Orsini appeared the arm of the Revolution. They knew very well that had the bomb been truly thrown the Empire would have collapsed that very night. A law was immediately drafted which allowed the government to deport without trial practically any person suspected of disaffection, especially those who had already been exiled or otherwise punished. Napoleon, though harassed and badly scared, kept his head and toned down the Bill. "The other day," he remarked, "I spoke of Thiers as illustrious and a credit to the nation—I can hardly to-day place him in the ranks of the outlawed." The Bill, in a slightly-modified form, passed through the *Corps législatif*, despite the opposition of Ollivier, and in the Senate of General MacMahon. The ruthless Espinasse was called to the Ministry of the Interior. His policy was formulated in the old war-cry of the *coup d'état*: "Let evil-doers tremble and the well-disposed take heart." But the Emperor himself presently took heart. Three hundred suspects were sent to Algeria, and from that time onwards the law passed in a moment of panic hung like a mere sword of Damocles till its legal expiry in 1865.

More dangerous to France in general and to the Emperor's own policy was the violent outcry of his adherents against the foreign States which harboured the enemies of his government and where those who

sought his life had matured their plots. Belgium, sharply rebuked, hastily recast her criminal code to satisfy the demands of her powerful neighbour. Great Britain, the asylum of the arch-revolutionaries, French and Italian, had to be remonstrated with more politely. Napoleon's task was not made easier by the furious threats of his colonels, published with conspicuous editorial ineptitude in the *Moniteur*, that they were prepared to rout the assassins out of their island lair. Walewski protested in milder terms against the tolerance extended by English law to conspirators against other and friendly Powers. Great Britain's answer was to turn out the cabinet which showed a disposition to comply with the French government's wishes; and in the face of the evidence a Middlesex jury acquitted Bernard, charged with conspiracy to murder. In fairness to John Bull it should be said that he had dealt very gently with those who had attempted to kill his own Queen.

Over the shrill cries of his partisans Napoleon made his calm voice heard at the English court. By a happy choice he sent over Pélissier as his ambassador, the very sight of whom at once recalled the brotherhood-in-arms of the two great countries. And, which everyone was slow to understand, his anger against the man who had sought his life had changed into a curious sympathy. Pianori had been a baker's boy, a common malefactor, it was said; Orsini bore a noble name, his father had served under the great Napoleon. Perhaps, too, the despot was still a little frightened of his prisoner. No one is so free to speak his mind as the man who has nothing more to fear and nothing more to hope for. Certain it is that when the accused man wrote to him His Majesty handed the letter to his advocate, Jules Favre.

The four Italians were tried on February 25th. The trial was fairly conducted, as it should have been, seeing how irresistible was the case for the prosecution. Chaix-d'Est-Ange, the Attorney General, provoked ironical laughter by referring scathingly to those who absolved

themselves from solemn duties by some shady transaction with their conscience. Like Napoleon himself before the jury of peers, Orsini, a man of romantic presence, disdained to plead for mercy. He had not, he said, actually thrown any of the bombs, but he had sought to remove the Emperor as an obstacle to the independence of his beloved country. Jules Favre without more ado abandoned his client to the rigour of the law, but held him up to the admiration of posterity as a patriot and a martyr. Then, to the astonishment of the public, he proceeded to read the letter addressed to the Emperor. With his last breath, the doomed man appealed to Napoleon to do nothing against the independence of Italy, which had been destroyed in 1849 by the French themselves. "Remember, Your Majesty," continued His Majesty's would-be slayer, "how the Italians, among them my own father, shed their blood joyfully for Napoleon the Great; how they remained faithful to the end; remember that till the cause of Italian freedom is gained the peace of Europe and your own security will be an empty dream. Sire, do not reject the prayer of a patriot who stands on the steps of the scaffold. Deliver my country, and the blessings of twenty-five million of my countrymen will follow you into posterity."

The wrongs of Italy could not, however, blind the Parisian jurors to the injuries inflicted on one hundred and fifty-six Frenchmen. Orsini, Pieri and di Rudio were sentenced to death; Gomez to penal servitude for life. All eyes were turned on the Emperor. Orsini's gallant bearing had made him almost a popular hero. The women could not bear the idea of that handsome head falling in the basket. People who had been in court recalled his fine way of brushing aside his long black hair. It distressed Napoleon that Orsini should misunderstand and distrust him. One likes to be on good terms with one's potential assassins. At least, they might part as friends. So Pietri, the prefect of police, a Corsican and therefore himself an Italian, paid a visit to the

condemned man at La Roquette and explained to him that he had very nearly succeeded in killing the best friend Italy ever had. Orsini thought that, after all, he might have been mistaken. It behoved him as a gentleman to apologize for his rash act. To Napoleon he wrote again: "Your Majesty's expressions of sympathy for Italy have afforded me no mean consolation in the hour of death. Before yielding up my last breath I declare that assassination is not according to my principles, although by a fatal aberration I organized the attempt of January 14th. No, political assassination never was my method, and I have discountenanced it in my writings and in my public acts, even at the peril of my own life. May my fellow countrymen learn that not by the method of assassination but by self-denial, devotion, unity and virtue alone can the deliverance of Italy be achieved. . . .As to the victims of January 14th, I offer my blood in expiation; and I adjure Independent Italy one day to compensate those who have suffered. Your Majesty will permit me to conclude by entreating him to spare, not my own life, but that of my accomplices."

The Empress Eugénie, who could assist unmoved at the dying agonies of an innocent and beautiful animal as an incident of the day's pleasures, was profoundly touched by the Italian murderer's heroic pose. She implored her husband to spare him, and was with difficulty restrained from visiting him at La Roquette. It is not recorded that she made any effort to save the half-crazy Pianori, whose attempt had not resulted in injury to anyone. The Emperor, naturally more tender of heart than she, sought an excuse for mercy. He was reminded by his counsellors that his uncle on a similar occasion had said: "I could pardon this man for having attempted my own life, but not for having taken that of so many others." It was a strange argument to use with Napoleon III. In the Rue le Peletier, Orsini, to compass the death of his country's enemy, had killed and wounded

one hundred and fifty-six persons; Napoleon's lieutenants, to put him on the throne, had shot at least as many unoffending and unresisting French folk in the heart of Paris. The Emperor could hardly have forgotten this. Yet in the end he listened to the Archbishop of Paris, who said the blood of the innocent called for vengeance. Di Rudio's sentence was commuted to transportation. He escaped, fought against slavery, became a major in the United States army, and died at a ripe old age in California, all his life protesting that Orsini never actually threw a bomb. Orsini and Pieri were left for death. They were beheaded on March 13th, dying with the courage and constancy of martyrs. "*Viva l'Italia*" cried Orsini as the knife fell. Yet his last thoughts, perhaps, were with his little daughters in England, and with an English girl whom he would never visit again in dreary Kentish Town.

The original attitude taken by Orsini towards the man he had set out to destroy produced, logically enough, strange reactions. Napoleon received his messages much as the victor in a duel may lean over and reverently receive the last message of the adversary who has perished by his blade. That, at any rate, he conceived to be his attitude; and that, of course, was the attitude which commended itself to his chivalrous Spanish wife. It had indeed been a duel to the death between friends, between those who should have understood each other—this poor Orsini, in his haste and disappointment, had attacked Italy's best friend! No one would have denied that, thought the Emperor. More than once, he had come near to sacrificing the interests of France to those of Italy. And that policy he would pursue, though he had so narrowly escaped death at Italian hands. *Though* he said to himself, not *because*; yet nothing the assassin had said would have left a deeper impression than these words, "Till the cause of Italian independence is gained, the peace of Europe and your own security will be an empty dream." The author of those letters from the

condemned cell, whether it was Orsini or another, had very deftly interwoven threats with entreaties.

Only the chivalrous impulse, however, could have inspired the Emperor's singular course of publishing the letters and insisting, to the astonishment of the Sardinian government, upon their publication in the Piedmontese gazette. Hübner, in Paris, protested; but the thing was done. The advanced wing of the nationalist party throughout Italy had already made a hero and a martyr of Orsini; they were very much surprised that Napoleon, of all men, should also look on him in that light. And—curiouser and curiouser, Cavour might have said—when Villamarina, the Sardinian envoy, announced that measures had been taken in the little kingdom to restrain the activities of revolutionary refugees, His Majesty in reply enquired how the fortifications of Casale and Alessandria, Sardinia's bulwarks against Austria, were getting on.

"Decidedly," Napoleon Bonaparte was thinking, "I ought to do something for Italy. It was not merely for my personal aggrandisement that, as a boy, I aimed at power. I've shed ideals enough, God knows! All the men of letters in France are against me. I shall go down in history as a despot. I'm fifty years of age and not in particularly good health, though Eugénie doesn't know that. It's about time I established some claim on the gratitude of mankind. I want Loulou to be proud of his father." He sent for one of his oldest friends, Conneau—Conneau, who belonged to the old Arenenberg days. "Go to Turin and tell Cavour I shall be at Plombières in July."

The news seemed too good to be true, and though Cavour went off ostentatiously for a holiday in Switzerland, he waited for a definite invitation from the Emperor's equerry before he presented himself at the Vosges resort. He was privately received by the Emperor at eleven in the forenoon of July 21st (1858). Without more ado, His Majesty announced that he was

disposed to back Sardinia in a war against Austria, on condition: first, that it should not be a revolutionary war; second, that a plausible diplomatic pretext should be found. He could not, he went on to say, object to the Austrians maintaining garrisons in Romagna while his own troops were at Rome. "I must," he added, "deal gently with the Pope, because I cannot afford to quarrel with the Catholics; and with the King of Naples, because of the Czar, who makes it a point of honour to protect him." "Very well," agreed Cavour, "let us leave the Pope and King Ferdinand on one side." He proposed, instead, that Sardinia should pick a quarrel with the Duke of Modena. Austria would certainly come in on the Duke's side. The war would be localized, Russia, Britain and Prussia would remain neutral. The Austrians having been driven out of Italy, Lombardy, Venetia, the Duchies and the Legations, were to be absorbed by Sardinia; Tuscany and Umbria might be constituted into an independent kingdom, which, Cavour, knowing that Napoleon piqued himself on his generosity towards the Bourbons, suggested might be given to the Duchess of Parma, the Comte de Chambord's sister. As to the Pope, he could keep Rome and be honoured if he liked with the title of President of the Italian Confederation.

The scheme was approved by the Emperor; but he now mentioned a further condition. France would also expect to get something out of the war. Sardinia must cede Savoy and Nice. Cavour yielded Savoy, but objected that Nice was purely Italian, and that Napoleon would be outraging the principle of nationality by insisting upon its cession. Napoleon tugged at his moustache and pondered. He must have envied the old-fashioned diplomatists of the old regime, who were never embarrassed by principles. "Well," he said, "these are, after all, secondary questions which can be settled later on."

That afternoon, in the course of a drive through the

Vosges country, the Emperor, holding the reins, proposed a further link in the alliance. He wanted Victor Emmanuel to give the hand of his daughter, Clotilda, to Prince Napoleon. His cousin, he said, had been very much misjudged. He was really a very good fellow. Lately, hearing that a former mistress of his was dying, he had enquired after her most solicitously—a thing, averred His Majesty, which not many men of the world would trouble to do. Cavour not very cheerfully promised to ask his King's consent to the proposal, reflecting that it was the lot of the Princesses of the House of Savoy to be unhappy in marriage. At parting the Emperor shook his fellow conspirator's hand, saying: "Trust me as I trust you."

After that, with an easy conscience, Napoleon travelled to Cherbourg, where he met Victoria and Albert, and assured them that he meditated nothing against England. "France," he declared at the public dinner, "mistress of herself, obeys only honour and reason." From Normandy the imperial pair travelled into Brittany, where they had not hitherto shown themselves. Amid the acclamations of the devout and royalist Armoricans, they prostrated themselves before the shrine of St. Anne at Auray. "Honour to the sovereign who has restored the throne of the Holy Father!" cried the prefect of Morbihan. His master turned a lack-lustre eye upon him. "Honour to the upholder of the papacy!" cried the Bishop of Rennes. Napoleon wondered. Like his wife, he could not think of himself as anything but a Catholic, but it must have seemed to him that the Vicar of Christ could afford to surrender the dignities of Duke of Romagna and Lord of the Marches.

Accused by his detractors of dissimulation, Louis Napoleon at no time during his reign took any trouble to disguise his intentions from his enemy. He let Cavour's visit be known through the Press. In the autumn he entertained Palmerston and Clarendon at Compiègne and discoursed to them on the lamentable condition of

Italy. In a journal called *La Presse* the hope was expressed that there would be war with Austria; and everybody knew that no newspaper in France would dare to say that without the sanction of the government. At the New Year's reception of the diplomatic body, a broader hint was given. Turning to Hübner, the Emperor said, "I am sorry my relations with your government are not as good as I could wish them to be, but let them know at Vienna that my sentiments for the Emperor personally will always be the same."

The ambassador tried to make light of these words, and attributed them to a fanciful and wayward intelligence. He knew that at the Tuileries there were powerful influences for peace. Persigny and Walewski cared nothing for the Italian cause. Napoleon had laboured in vain to convert his wife to the doctrine of nationalities. To Arese, with whom she had become friendly, she wrote: "I am trying, as far as in me lies, to become Italian. . . . Are you not afraid yourself that this business of redeemer may prove to be a fool's game? The Emperor for the first time is running counter to the sentiments of his people." Yet in January Victor Emmanuel pronounced a threatening speech from the throne and the alliance between the houses of Bonaparte and Savoy was consummated in the marriage of the Prince Napoleon and the Princess Clotilda.

Since his schooldays at Augsburg Louis Napoleon had always been something of a doctrinaire. All through the summer he had been busy preparing an *apologia*. Actually written by La Guéronnière, a renegade Republican, with the assistance of Eugène Rendu, the work was carefully revised by the Emperor and announced by him to his ministers as the statement of his views on the Italian question. It was given forth to the world on February 4th, 1859, as a pamphlet under the title of *Napoleon III and Italy*. Herein it was recalled that Napoleon I had declared he always had the intention of making Italy free and independent, and that he had desired the

centralization of all the geographical nationalities which had been cut up or dissolved by political causes. "The Emperor Napoleon I thought to conquer the peoples in order to liberate them; Napoleon III wishes to free them without conquering them." This passage was certainly written by the erstwhile prisoner of Ham. The unhappy lot of the Papal States, of Naples, and the minor States of the peninsula was contrasted with that of Sardinia. Victor Emmanuel must be supported, the vices of the Austrian regime must no longer be tolerated. The object of French policy must be to create a federated Italy, an Italy freed from foreign domination. The pious hope was expressed that diplomacy might accomplish on the eve of a struggle what would have to be done on the morrow of a victory.

The pamphlet was accepted by France and by Europe as a manifesto. England, that platonic friend of Italy, showed herself specially active in the cause of peace. Lord Cowley travelled between Paris and Vienna, leaving a trail of oil upon the troubled waters. Then Russia intervened with a proposal for a congress. Napoleon, never anxious for bloodshed, consented; Austria did so with an ill grace, and began to impose conditions. Cavour hastened to Paris. The Emperor, he decided, had allowed his zeal for Italy to be undermined by the Catholic party, but he could be relied upon at the eleventh hour not to go back on the engagements entered into at Plombières. Sardinia stiffened her back and refused to disarm as a preliminary to the conference. Cowley, to save her face, proposed a general disarmament. Still the little kingdom refused. On April 19th Cavour gave way upon orders from Paris; but three days previously, Lord Malmesbury, the Emperor's friend, had heard from Count Apponyi that an officer was about to convey an ultimatum from Vienna to Turin. It may be that Victor Emmanuel made a pretence of lowering his sword only because a hint had been given him that war was inevitable. On

April 23rd the expected letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph was presented to the Sardinian government. The King was summoned to disarm there and then. The demand made no mention of the European conference. Cavour returned a firm refusal. On the evening of April 26th, Sardinia was at war with Austria, and four days later the whitecoats crossed the Ticino.

Austria had put herself in the wrong, to the annoyance, among others, of Queen Victoria, who had no sympathy with nationalist aspirations. Napoleon issued his declaration of war on May 3rd. "Things having been brought by Austria to this pass, she must extend her dominion to the foot of the Alps, or Italy must be free as far as the Adriatic. I seek no conquests. The object of this war is to leave Italy mistress of herself." He would not countenance disorder, and the rights of the Holy Father would be respected. Having thrown these last sops to conservative opinion, he could nod to his old self across the years and say: "I have kept faith." And in that hour it was only the friends of youth who rallied round him—Conneau, Mme. Cornu, and for not wholly disinterested reasons, Cousin Nap. Persigny, knowing that this alliance with revolutionaries would shock and offend the good people at Windsor, disapproved; Eugénie still feared that this insensate piece of knight-errantry might end in breaking a lance against the Pope's. It was at some violence to his own feelings that Morny, now president of the *Corps législatif*, tried to awaken in that dull, businesslike body some enthusiasm for so altruistic a war. The only genuine support in the Assembly came from those benches from which hitherto only obstruction had been expected. Jules Favre fervently applauded the Emperor's determination to free a sister nation. He might have added, "I thank His Majesty for carrying out the instructions of my deceased client, Felice Orsini."

Similarly, as the Emperor drove through Paris on his departure for the seat of war, he was greeted with real enthusiasm precisely in the quarters where a few years

before men had died resisting him. "Don't worry about your wife and child," a woman called to him. "We of the faubourg will look after them for you. Good luck!" That day Napoleon was what he had set out to be—the Champion of the Revolution, the Paladin of Liberty. The bands played "*Partant pour la Syrie*"—the song written by his mother. Even the Empress for a moment forgot her anxiety for the Pope (or, should we say, for the Duke of Romagna?) and felt proud of her husband, going off to the fields of Italy to beat the Austrians, as his uncle had gone fifty-nine years before.

To beat them—yes. From those remembered names—Rivoli, Arcola, Marengo—Napoleon III must have derived a confidence that no achievements of his own could inspire. Alone in all Europe he seems to have remembered that the Austrians were always beaten, and he must have smiled at their acceptance of the ordeal by battle. His ally's capital was only five days' easy march from their frontier; reaching Genoa, amid the frantic plaudits of the Italians, on May 12th, he could hardly have been surprised to hear that the enemy was still hugging the banks of the Sesia. Giulay was to prove the worthy successor of Würmser and Alvinzi.

Yet Turin was practically uncovered. By Canrobert's advice the French and Sardinian armies had been concentrated south of the Po, around Casale, Alessandria and Valenza. The Emperor, taking command, for a moment found himself confused by the practical business of war. But not for nothing had he studied the theoretical side of it. In accordance with a plan proposed by Canrobert or by himself, he determined to transport the bulk of his army from south to north, parallel with the enemy's front, and turning his right flank, to interpose between him and Milan. It was a daring and original movement, which, had it failed, would have evoked the usual sneers at the theoretical or text-book strategist. It was also exactly the movement for which an Austrian general would be unprepared. Giulay had already been

worsted in an armed reconnaissance by Forey at Montebello. While he was expecting the allies to cross the Po at Valenza they were travelling—some by railway—along the length of his front and within striking distance. A vigorous attack by the Sardinians at Palestro he dismissed as a feint. It was only the next day (June 1st) that the Austrian commander grasped his enemy's plan. Even now he might have taken his columns in flank. Instead, according to the Austrian habit, he fell back behind the Ticino. Meantime having sent MacMahon round by the north to take the enemy in flank and rear, Napoleon with his Guard, followed by Canrobert, marched towards the bridge of San Martino. It was undefended, Giulay having elected to hold the canal which runs parallel with the river. Advancing to the canal bridge, the French Guard sustained throughout the whole of the long summer's day the attack of a superior force of Austrians. The Emperor, not much behind the firing line, watched the progress of his first battle with apparent calm, but, as may be suspected, with a wildly beating heart. Canrobert's reinforcements were slow to come; MacMahon, as it seemed to those engaged in this unequal struggle, unaccountably tarried. Napoleon kept at his post, exhorting his Guard to hold out, sending urgent commands to Canrobert to hasten. At half-past four, MacMahon, who had been delayed by the imperative necessity of closing up his columns, threw his weight against Magenta, on the Austrian right rear. The day was saved. Giulay retired towards Milan. In the fulness of his heart, the Emperor named MacMahon Duke of Magenta and Marshal of France. He might fairly have allotted a part of the credit to himself. It was the Guard, fighting under his own eyes and with his direct encouragement, which by their desperate resistance to the Austrian advance had gained time for MacMahon to carry out his turning movement.

Napoleon's satisfaction with his own generalship was marred by distress at the sight of the battlefield. The

memory of the carnage shadowed even the triumph which awaited him at Milan. The Austrians had evacuated the city, the Italians received him as their liberator. For a moment recovering his enthusiasm, here where his mother's brother had ruled as viceroy of the kingdom of Italy, he called on the Italians to close up their ranks. "Unite with one object—the liberation of your country. It is not with any programme for deposing your sovereigns or in order to impose my will upon you that I have come. The task of my army is to contain the enemy and to maintain internal order. . . . We are not here to hinder the manifestation of your legitimate aspirations." In truth it was unnecessary to depose the sovereigns. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Duke of Modena, and the Duchess of Parma had already abandoned their States. On June 11th the last Austrian contingents were withdrawn from the Papal States and all Romagna was calling for incorporation with Sardinia.

The young Emperor Francis Joseph hurried down from Vienna to take command of his beaten army and revive its spirit. The French and Sardinians were approaching the Mincio, expecting that it would be defended like the Ticino on the farther side. But, assisting in the early morning of June 24th at Montechiaro, at the burial of one of his aides-de-camp, Napoleon was informed that from the lake side down to Medole his troops were in contact with the enemy. Perhaps these were merely rearguard affairs. "No," said the Emperor, "this is the battle." Galloping along the road to Mantua, he perceived in the village of Solferino the key of the position. If that were taken, the Austrian line would be pierced at the centre. By telling Canrobert on his extreme right to look out for the approach of enemy columns from Mantua, of which he had been warned by an Italian sympathizer, he came near to losing what his perspicacity gained. For while the combat waged fiercely round Solferino and the Sardinians on the left were driven back by Benedek, Niel on the right, des-

perately pressed, could with difficulty prevail on Canrobert to send him sufficient reinforcements. But at two o'clock Solferino was taken, and by four o'clock, Cavriana. As Napoleon had designed, the enemy's centre was pierced, and he must necessarily retreat. Niel and Canrobert wrangled fiercely in the Emperor's presence, and were restrained only by his command from crossing swords. But the battle of Solferino was won. "Great battle, great victory," Napoleon telegraphed to Eugénie.

The flush of victory passed. Somewhat with the eye of Little Wilhelmine, the victor surveyed the battleground. They counted sixteen hundred French corpses; eight thousand, five hundred wounded. The Sardinians lost seven hundred killed, three thousand five hundred wounded. The vanquished admitted to thirteen thousand casualties. Orsini's ghost might well be pleased.

Francis Joseph reformed his army behind the Mincio, then put the Adige between himself and his enemy. The French, though heavily reinforced by Prince Napoleon with a corps of observation from the other side of the Po, were in no haste to pursue. Napoleon was sick of war and its horrors. He was also sick of the heat and the fatigue of it all. On the very eve of Solferino, Fleury, in a letter from the imperial headquarters, told his wife as much; then, significantly, he went on to argue that Russia and Prussia would never permit the total overthrow of the Austrian Empire; France had gone far enough; the Comtesse Fleury was asked to point this out to Walewski and to get him to propose the mediation of England. It is unthinkable that the Emperor's chief equerry would have said as much except at a hint from his master. Napoleon had already been warned by the Russian ambassador that the war fever was spreading throughout Germany, and that large Prussian forces were concentrating on the Rhine. Russia herself was annoyed by the presence of Kossuth in the Emperor's

camp, and said bluntly that she would not tolerate another insurrection in Hungary. The Empress was counselling moderation. She was frightened of the Germans and was still, it may be suspected, supremely anxious to avoid a conflict with the Pope. His Majesty was observed at Somma Campagna to be overwhelmed by the heat and to look worried and preoccupied. How far he was swayed by sentiment, how far by physical fatigue, how far by policy, he could not have said himself with certainty. When England refused the rôle of mediator he acted on what seemed a sudden impulse, but which was probably the result of a reasoned debate within himself. Fleury sent for in haste, found him closeted with the King of Sardinia. "Here," said the Emperor, "is a letter which you have to take to the Emperor of Austria. It contains proposals for an armistice." He glanced towards Victor Emmanuel, who nodded. It is asserted that the King believed he was giving his assent to a mere truce, which would make possible the embodiment of another hundred thousand Italians from the revolted principalities.

But in a private talk between the two Emperors in a house at Villafranca, on July 11th, what was virtually a treaty of peace was concluded. Invariably the Sovereign who vaunted himself to be a parvenu captivated the most aristocratic princes of Europe. And there was no rôle he enjoyed more than the generous conqueror's. When the two monarchs reappeared at the door of the house and parted shaking hands, Francis Joseph had agreed to cede Lombardy, since it was in fact conquered, not to Victor Emmanuel, that legitimate King, but to Napoleon, to do what he liked with. Venetia, he retained but he would not object to entering an Italian confederation with the Pope as its president. His allies, the Sovereigns of Tuscany and Modena, must be restored—but in what manner was left unsettled. These, the preliminaries of the peace, were ratified in a written document which Prince Napoleon took to Francis Joseph at Verona.

Further details were to be settled at a conference at Zurich.

Cavour hearing what was afoot, had made unavailing efforts to see Napoleon during the day. When he saw the draft of the treaty he read it only halfway through, flew into a rage and resigned office. Napoleon had spoken of freeing Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic, and he had stopped short at the Mincio, leaving Venice—glorious Venice—in the hands of the Hun. Victor Emmanuel bore his disappointment with more dignity. "Poor Italy!" he sighed; then he said to Napoleon, "I shall always be grateful to Your Majesty for what you have done for the independence of my country; and I beg of you to believe that whatever may happen you may count upon my fidelity." When the treaty was placed before him, noting the stipulation as to the two dukes, he signed with the reservation, "As far as I am concerned." Napoleon handed over Lombardy to him, and on July 16th recrossed the Alps, leaving behind him an angry and bitterly disappointed nation.

IV

As the returning conqueror's carriage rolled down the western slope of the Alps he may have recalled a quiet reach of the Thames, and heard again Mrs. Disraeli's angry remonstrance, "You are too adventurous, sir—you should not attempt things you are unable to accomplish." But he had been honestly incapable of getting the Disraelis off that mudbank—could he say that after Magenta and Solferino he was genuinely incapable of fulfilling his implied promise to Italy? Amid the acclamations and the festivals with which France greeted him and his victorious legions, despite the glory which he had personally acquired, even to those who congratulated him upon his moderation and his statecraft, he betrayed

COUNTESS CASTIGLIONE
(From the painting attributed to Winterhalter)

his doubts and uneasiness of mind. He was too much at pains to justify himself for having made peace; he multiplied his reasons, as though aware that no one of them could be accounted sufficient. Addressing the Conservatives, he might have spared himself this trouble: they thought he had done far too much for Italy already and would have been better pleased, no doubt, if he had left Lombardy as well as Venetia under the foreign yoke. It was the democrats who showed their disgust, and to mollify them the Emperor proclaimed a general amnesty for the eighteen hundred political offenders who remained in prison, in exile, or in the convict settlements of Algeria and Cayenne. This act of grace was rejected by a few, who wrote to the papers saying they would rather remain in exile than return to an enslaved country.

"*Il est bien fou de cerveau qui prétend contenter tout le monde et son père*," says a homely French proverb. Bitterly Napoleon must have realized that there was no pleasing everyone. In the months that followed, pestered wherever he went by Italian emissaries and pleaders for all parties, no doubt he often cursed himself for not having fought the war to a finish and driven the Austrians, the Dukes, the King of the Two Sicilies, and even the Holy Father himself, into the deepest waters of the Mediterranean Sea. As to Victoria and Albert, they were completely disgusted with him, for having sided with the wicked revolutionaries and upset the sacrosanct constitutions of Vienna. Her Britannic Majesty's ministers and subjects, however, were much more disposed to blame him for not having made a clean job of it. Lord John Russell, for instance, could not be persuaded by the Queen that there was anything immoral in deposing a tyrannical dynasty. Nor was the English Press in those days nearly as tender towards royalty as it has since become. And the curious part of it is that the much-abused Emperor was entirely right. He had given the Italians the chance they had sought; and this, at last, they were shrewd enough to perceive. Napoleon

had agreed with Francis Joseph that the Dukes of Tuscany and Modena might be restored; he had not, however, bound himself to take any steps to that end; and it was already plain that if Their Highnesses returned to their duchies, it would be at the risk of their lives. Nevertheless, he reminded Cavour that nothing had been said at Plombières about the incorporation of Tuscany with the kingdom of Sardinia; he preferred to see it erected into a separate kingdom, for the time being under a Prince of the House of Savoy; but when all the provinces pronounced for annexation to Piedmont, he acquiesced, as the Italians should have known he would, in the decision of the sovereign people. Still, feeling he had not carried out his promises to Cavour in full, he had not hitherto demanded his reward. Now, when Victor Emmanuel found himself King of half Italy, his dubious ally claimed Savoy and Nice as a counterpoise to the aggrandisement of Sardinia. After all, he owed something to France.

Now, in August 1859, Palmerston, full of platonic enthusiasm for Italy, had urged France to approve the annexation of the duchies; to which Walewski had replied that France did not particularly want to see a kingdom of twelve million souls set up on her threshold and that if this came to pass she would expect compensation. Notwithstanding, many people in England (which had pocketed Malta, the Cape, and a few other trifles at the close of the Napoleonic wars, as the price of our services to Europe) were horrified by such bargaining. "He will want the Rhine frontier next," they said at Windsor, where such a demand would have seemed as dreadful as the cession of Kent. That the people of Savoy themselves passionately desired the union weighed not at all with Prince Albert, who, writing to the Prince Regent of Prussia, declared that he recognized neither the principle of national sovereignty nor universal suffrage; which was at least consistent on the part of the virtual ruler of Ireland and India. At this very time the

Emperor had shown his good-will towards England, as well as consideration for his own poorer subjects, by negotiating, at the instance of Cobden, a very liberal treaty of commerce between the two countries; but the Court, the Press and the majority of the public in Britain chose to regard the man they had been acclaiming as their friend a little while before as an enemy to the peace of Europe. From this preposterous panic dated the volunteer forces which so hugely tickled *Punch* and which for so many years supplied young Englishmen with a healthful week-end occupation. "What possible concern have we in this matter?" a few sober Englishmen asked each other. Savoy indeed had so far been known to the majority of Britons only as the birthplace of a succulent kind of cabbage; a good many cockneys possibly supposed that a well-known precinct of the Strand was the object of the French tyrant's cupidity. The question was raised for the second time in the House of Commons, Napoleon may have learnt with mild amusement, by that same Kinglake who had fiercely attacked him in his history of the Crimean War and who had never forgiven him for having "cut him out" in the affections of Miss Howard—or was it Miss Rowles?—years before. As a breath of sanity came the voice of John Bright: "Perish Savoy (though I do not believe she will perish) rather than England be embroiled in a quarrel with a neighbour in a matter in which we have no concern."

Not since Changarnier had talked of sending him to Vincennes had Louis Napoleon been so angry. At a private concert at the Tuileries, one evening in March, our representative, Lord Cowley, found himself suddenly fiercely rebuked by his Imperial Majesty, within hearing of the Papal Nuncio and the Russian ambassador. "What is the meaning," demanded the sovereign, "of this ceaseless opposition to me in the English Parliament and the English Press? I have done all I can to please England. What has Savoy got to do with you?" Turn-

ing to the Russian ambassador, he added, "I might as well have protested when England annexed Perim in the Red Sea." The Emperor passed on, but presently finding Lord Cowley alone, returned to the charge. The Englishman interrupted him and protested against being taken to task before the representatives of other Powers. Napoleon at once changed his tone and said he was sorry. The incident was reported by Cowley to his government, but nothing came of it—perhaps to the regret of the Queen, who had now persuaded herself that her former friend was either Mephistopheles, or, as her subject, the Rev. Mr. Baxter, had undertaken to demonstrate, the Horned Beast of the Apocalypse.

Savoy and Nice were annexed, and no appreciable damage was done to the British Empire in consequence. So anxious was Napoleon to placate the other Powers that in the decree of annexation he made no mention of the wishes of the people transferred, but spoke only of the necessity of procuring for France a strong strategical frontier. What the people of Savoy thought about the transfer was manifested by the enthusiastic welcome they gave their new sovereign when he and his consort paid them a visit. There was a water fête on the lake of Annecy, at which Eugénie, at her loveliest and noblest, wore a red mantle. "You look like a Dogaressa," remarked her husband admiringly; and she felt tempted to throw her ring into the lake in token of dominion, as she told Paléologue, forty and odd years later, recalling that day as one of the greatest in her long life.

For it must have seemed to her that her husband's cautious devious policy had justified itself. Some substantial profit had resulted from his knight-errantry. He would leave an enlarged dominion to their son—in whose favour he talked of abdicating in the year 1874, when he would be sixty-six and Loulou eighteen. The dynasty appeared to be definitely established. Russia was tepidly friendly. At a meeting with the Emperor at Baden, the German princes had allowed themselves

to be reassured. Austria seemed disposed to leave Italy to herself. "If only Napoleon would do so!" sighed the Empress. Surely, he had done enough for that country. Victor Emmanuel now ruled over as large a kingdom of Italy as that called into being by Napoleon the Greater. But Italy could not be left alone, and the Emperor could not wean himself of his fondness for her. As a man draws near to the threshold of age, not seldom he reverts to the ideals and interests of his boyhood. In his young manhood the Bonaparte adventurer had only time to listen to the promptings of his ambition. That ambition realized, he lost himself for a while in the delights of power and pleasure. Wallowing in self-indulgence and glittering splendour, he was supremely concerned to keep what he had gained. But this tired man of fifty-two had got used to the purple by now. Pleasure he pursued with leaden feet. The balls and state functions continued, but they had become a bore. Vaguely, he wanted to complete the work he had begun.

The Pope stood in the way.

Like his wife, Napoleon was a Catholic born and bred. He could not have imagined himself anything else. He was not pious; his amours left him, most of his life, it is safe to say, in what Catholics would define as a state of mortal sin. Like the vast majority of Christians, he went on believing because he feared to disbelieve. He professed to be shocked by Ernest Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. Like his uncle, he flattered himself that he believed all that his *curé* taught. But like his uncle and like the other Catholic sovereigns of past ages, he very clearly recognized the distinction between the Vicar of Christ and the monarch of the Roman States. Those States stretched astride the peninsula; from the mere geographical point of view they formed a positive barrier to Italian unity. One day that barrier would certainly be forced. What then would become of the spiritual head of Christendom? Thus meditated the Emperor of the French, looking out on Paris from his cabinet in the

Tuileries. How great a thing it would be if he could save the Holy Father and at the same time realize that early and never-fading dream!

In December 1859 there appeared another pamphlet from the pen of La Guéronnière, with the title, *The Pope and the Congress*. (The congress never met.) "I did not write it," said Napoleon III, "but I endorse the ideas it contains." The principal idea, expressed with exaggerated reverence, was that the Supreme Pontiff should renounce all his temporal possessions except the city of Rome. Manifestly, if the spiritual power could only be freely exercised in a kingdom of the Pope's own, the city would afford that security quite as well as a few small provinces. The Papal States at their largest extent had never guaranteed the Pontiff against foreign aggression. Rome was sacked by the troops of that faithful son of the Church, Charles V. Avignon and the Venaissin had been seized by Louis XIV. Obviously, the farther the frontiers were flung, the more surely would the Sovereign be drawn into conflicts with other and far greater worldly Powers. It might also be urged that the spiritual power would gain by not being associated with the acts of a temporal ruler, which must inevitably invite criticism and engender party strife.

This point was at once illustrated by the reply of Pius IX. The tract was branded as "a veritable act of homage to the Revolution." The spiritual chief of millions of Latins, Germans and Celts thus avowed his opposition to an essentially political movement, with which, had he not been a temporal sovereign, he could have had no concern. His Holiness demanded from the Emperor a repudiation "of this signal monument of hypocrisy, this ignoble tissue of contradictions."

Before this, no doubt, Napoleon had been frequently summoned by the sound of her gong to his wife's room above his own, to explain his attitude towards the august Head of the Church. Perhaps the letter he now sent was submitted to Eugénie for her comments and sanction.

At all events, he did not ask the angry Pius to surrender his remaining provinces. During the war, he said, he had been greatly troubled about the States of the Church, and one of his reasons for making peace so soon was to avert a revolution. It was a pity the Pope had not listened to his advice and granted self-government to Romagna. It was impossible now to arrest the progress of the insurrection, and only the resignation of Garibaldi had preserved the Marches from invasion. His Holiness was strongly advised to recognize the separation of Romagna and to ask the Powers in exchange to guarantee the integrity of his remaining dominions.

Whether the Powers would have given the guarantee may be doubted. England, whose sympathy with the Italian cause was largely compounded of hatred for the Papacy, assuredly not; improbably, Russia; not very probably, Prussia. But Pius IX did not put them to the test. He clung to the province of Romagna as though it was the very rock on which Christ had built His Church. In an encyclical dated January 19th, 1860, he spoke as follows: "We cannot surrender the said provinces without violating the solemn oath that binds us . . . . without undermining the rights not only of the Italian princes who have been so unjustly despoiled of their States, but those of all Christian princes who cannot behold with indifference the introduction of certain most pernicious principles."

The oath, as Prince Napoleon ("Plon-Plon," as they had nicknamed him in the Crimea) later on pointed out in the course of a tremendous speech in the Senate, had been originally designed to prevent the Popes from alienating portions of the Pontifical States in favour of their nephews or illegitimate children. And among the "pernicious principles" was the right of the peoples to choose their own rulers; by which right the Emperor of the French reigned.

It was well for Pius that he had to do with a man of milder temper than Napoleon I or Henry VIII of Eng-

land. Upon reading the last pronouncement of the Vatican, Louis Napoleon might have remarked that it had been for maintaining this Pontiff upon his earthly throne that he had been doomed to death by Pianori and Orsini. It was by his orders that the Roman Republic had been overthrown in 1849; it was now by his troops that the Pope's anything but loving subjects were held in subjection. Even Eugénie in after years was stirred to indignation by the ingratitude of the Roman See. To one of Napoleon's essentially reasonable disposition the uncompromising stupidity of His Holiness must have been peculiarly exasperating. He was advised by de Gramont, his own ambassador at Rome, to leave the Pope to his fate. The moment seemed specially favourable. Upon the advice of a Belgian prelate, once a soldier, named Xavier de Mérode, Pius had resolved to raise an army of foreigners to protect himself against his fellow-countrymen. The command was given to Lamoricière, one of the generals whom Napoleon had deemed it necessary to expel at the time of the *coup d'état*. But even now the long-suffering Emperor hesitated.

And fortunately for Pius. For news came that Garibaldi had landed in Sicily—presently, that he was master of the island. Napoleon at Fontainebleau had perforce to listen to the appeals of the envoys of the Bourbon King. The spectacle of a Bonaparte stooping to maintain a Bourbon on this throne would no doubt have pleased him; but this man, denounced by so many Frenchmen as a tyrant, hated tyrants. "Grant autonomy to Sicily and come to some understanding with Turin," was all the advice he could give. Hollow enough it sounded to Francis II, but it was not insincere. His aspirations for Italy he was prepared to confine to seeing it free from foreign domination and domestic tyrants. The scheme of an Italian confederation to which the Pope had refused to be a party would have satisfied him. But the moment for making terms had gone by. Garibaldi was at Messina —he had crossed the Faro—he was in Calabria—he

had entered Naples! The young King shut himself up in Gaeta and invited the Courts of Europe to state their intentions towards his dynasty and his throne. "Let the tyrant perish," cried the English, though Queen Victoria would have helped him if she could. Napoleon shrugged his sagging shoulders. Italy was shaking herself free—he could not arrest the march of events. Besides, he had other grave matters on hand. That year he had sent an expedition to Syria to restore order, in consequence of a massacre of the Christian population; a crusade in which he had been ill seconded by Britain, the zealous defender of the Sultan. "Is not *Partant pour la Syrie* the imperial hymn?" asked *The Times*. French and English, notwithstanding, were fighting side by side in China; and at Pekin it was by a reversal of rôles the French who had to protect the natives against the severity of their ally. "I wish to see Italy pacified," wrote the Emperor wearily to Persigny; "and without foreign intervention, so that our troops may be able to leave Rome."

Some feared that the Pope would leave Rome, and in a hurry, at the approach of Garibaldi. De Gramont boasted that he had to hold on to the Holy Father by the skirt of his cassock. "Why didn't he let him go?" thought Napoleon. "By his flight the Roman problem would have been solved." On the boulevards the hawkers were selling an ingenious mechanical puzzle to the cry of "*Voilà la question romaine!*" But the Roman question might become a European question if Garibaldi took the city, as he announced his intention of doing. His red shirt was a warning to all monarchs, even to those possessed of liberal sympathies, that the flame of the Revolution might spread from the south to the north of Italy and thence across the Alps. Mazzini, behind the Liberator, wanted a Republic. Thouvenel, who had replaced Walewski—that illegitimate champion of legitimacy—at the Foreign Office, invited Austria, perhaps without his master's consent, to intervene,

provided she left Lombardy alone.* But Austria could be tempted back into that arena only by the hope of chastising Piedmont.

Cavour divined the conflict going on in the Emperor's mind. He sent Farini and Cialdini to talk with him at Chambéry. The Red Shirts were within a few marches of the Papal border. Any day one might hear that the Republic was proclaimed at Rome and the French garrison besieged in Sant'Angelo. At this juncture the King of Sardinia proposed to occupy Umbria and the Marches, in order to preserve them from the Revolution. To Napoleon it must have seemed better that the odium of stifling the Republic a second time should attach to Victor Emmanuel than to himself. Did he dismiss the envoys with an impatient, "Act, then, but act quickly"? So Cialdini afterwards affirmed, probably translating into words what was merely a gesture of grudging assent.

At all events, the Emperor, on the point of starting for Algeria, was careful to warn the cabinet of Turin that he would countenance the occupation of the two Papal provinces only if order could not otherwise be maintained. He went further. Hearing that the Sardinian troops had crossed the frontier without waiting for the Revolutionaries to give them this excuse, he declared himself "in opposition" to King Victor Emmanuel, and ordered the Roman garrison to be reinforced. He may have meant what he now said, but Cialdini, remembering his manner at Chambéry, did not believe it. Lamoricière had collected his heterogeneous levies on the borders of Umbria and the Marches and threatened to reconquer Romagna. He would treat the Revolution, he proclaimed, as one treats a mad dog. The Sardinian government notified the Vatican that it could not stand by and see an Italian people bullied and threatened by a foreign force collected from all the ends of the earth. Napoleon, returning from Algeria, learned that

* Seignobos.

the Pontifical army had been dispersed at Castelfidardo, that Ancona had surrendered, and that Umbria and the Marches were in the possession of Victor Emmanuel. The Pope reigned as king only in the actual province of Rome, and owed his preservation to the soldiers of the monarch elected in virtue of that "most pernicious principle," the sovereignty of the people.

Napoleon had not much sense of humour, otherwise he might have enjoyed the irony of the *dénouement*. That he was not displeased by the failure of the general who had been his avowed opponent, and of his levies, recruited largely among the legitimists of France, may be taken for granted; but he thought it politic to signify his displeasure at Victor Emmanuel's high-handed action. He recalled his ambassador from Turin, and he stationed a squadron before beleaguered Gaeta with orders to pay proper compliments to the doomed Neapolitan royalties. Cavour and his master could afford to despise these dignified reproofs. On October 21st, 1860, the people of the ancient kingdom of the Two Sicilies voted for incorporation with the Sardinian monarchy; in February, Gaeta fell, and King Francis was politely taken off and landed in the Pontifical States by a French despatch-boat. On February 6th, Victor Emmanuel assumed the title of King of Italy. Cavour sang his Nunc Dimittis. On June 6th he was dead.

His dream of a free Italy at one time, at any rate, had been Napoleon's. Yet a French garrison was still maintained at Rome, and France did not recognize the new kingdom. Caution so sedulously cultivated had become the Emperor's most dangerous infirmity. He had become as fearful of the triumph of his own ideas as of the wiles of his enemies. In the most striking success he suspected some deadly pitfall. The year 1861 was half gone before he could make up his mind to follow the lead set by England and to acknowledge the fruit of his own machinations and his own victories. Even when he had signed the formal act of recognition,

although it was stated to be in no way prejudicial to the claims of the Pope, he hesitated to produce it. When at last, upon a sign from him, it was read out by Thouvenel in council, the Empress rose and walked stiffly out of the room.

V

Forty years later, having been refused an audience by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII for no other reason than that she had visited the Italian royal family a long time before, the widowed Empress vehemently denied that she had ever been a Clerical, though she had always been a fervent Catholic. But in her thirties this distinction could not always have been very apparent to her sorely-plagued husband. Upon her return from Algeria, her religious feeling was intensified by the sudden death of her sister, the Duchess of Alba, only two days before Castelfidardo. Had the order of the two events been inverted, Her Majesty would certainly have regarded the one as implying God's judgment on the other. "If the Pope is driven from Rome," she cried, "I shall follow my child's godfather"—a course, it was remarked, which would have justified the father of her child in suing for a divorce. Through the autumn of 1860 she brooded over the wrongs of the Holy Father, and unable to endure the neighbourhood of her Laodicean consort, decided upon a visit to Scotland, the country of her mother's father. She lunched with Queen Victoria and never once mentioned the Emperor, except to present his compliments. "It is altogether very strange," ruminated the Queen. "She looked very pretty, but very sad—and in speaking of her health and her return from Algiers, began to cry." The Empress returned to Paris, apparently cheered up and benefited, extraordinary to relate, by a visit to Scot-

land and Manchester, among other places, at the end of November!

Napoleon III hated to be on bad terms with anyone. To be frowned on by his wife was acutely distressing to the man who at Strasbourg and Boulogne had tried to effect an insurrection by kindness, and who, having knocked down his antagonists in the Crimea and at Solferino, hastily picked them up and shook hands with them. He was not in love with Eugénie any longer; but he liked her better than anybody else, except their son. He cast about for some way to mollify her. To sacrifice a mistress would not do, for Eugénie, despite occasional fits of jealousy, was well aware that he really set no store by any of the women. Besides, she did not want him to make amends to her, but to Holy Church.

The opportunity was found at last in an unlikely quarter.

For four or five years past the Emperor had been apprised by his ministers of trouble with the far-off Republic of Mexico. That country found it in the highest degree inconvenient to pay its debts, and its creditors continually importuned their respective governments in Europe to collect those debts by force. The question became more insistent. Morny thought that some strong action should be taken. But Morny had a finger in so many mysterious financial pies that his brother might well have been cautious of taking his advice. To play the sheriff's officer was very much less to His Majesty's taste than playing the crusader in China and Syria and the liberator in Italy. Still, the talk of Mexico recalled dreams dreamed in his cell at Ham of a canal across the isthmus and of a great Latin State called in to redress the balance of the New World and to stem the ever-mounting Anglo-Saxon tide.

At one time or another, even, he had vaguely discussed the creation of such an occidental empire with some of the highly-coloured exiles who, speaking the Empress's own tongue, received a cordial welcome at her Court.

Among these was a nice young ladies' man, Hidalgo by name, second secretary to the Mexican legation in London. Eugénie had first met him in her mother's house, and to him she entrusted the honourable but melancholy duty of escorting the body of her sister back to Spain. This young man often talked about his distressful country, and said that the only hope for it lay in superseding the republican form of government by a monarchy. "A good idea," said Her Majesty, just then much preoccupied by the affairs of Italy. "Why not put the Duke of Modena on the throne?" But as it could not be supposed that Napoleon would lend any money or troops to find the discharged prince a new situation, the project was dropped.

The idea, however, interested the Empress, not only from the political, but from the much more important religious, point of view. The actual government of Mexico was violently anti-clerical, and was waging war upon the Church. At Biarritz, in September, 1861, therefore, while Eugénie was still sore about her husband's recognition of the Italian kingdom, Hidalgo, seated at her feet, returned to the Mexican topic and declared that the time was ripe for realizing his dream. Her Majesty at once led the young man into her husband's presence. Hidalgo announced that he had just heard that England and Spain were about to fit out an expedition to enforce their claims against Mexico. The United States, he added, were in the throes of a great civil war, and could not oppose the flags of three great allied nations. It would certainly be possible at this juncture to establish a monarchy under French auspices.

Without hesitation, the Emperor replied: "If England and Spain are indeed prepared to act, and the interests of France demand it, I will join them; and if Mexico seeks to organize herself with the help of foreign Powers, I will lend a hand."

This was better than Hidalgo could have hoped for. Having recovered his breath, he asked Napoleon if he

had anyone in view to fill the projected throne. No, His Majesty had not. One or two princes were suggested, including the out-of-work duke. At last the Archduke Maximilian was mentioned. Napoleon, not aware that this prince had already received overtures from the small band of Mexican royalists, approved the nomination. Then Eugénie, pleased, took Hidalgo away to discuss the scheme with Walewski.

To the Emperor the project appealed at first sight, undoubtedly, as the long-looked-for means of gratifying his wife and offering a sop to the clericals' conscience. For the loss to the Papacy of three Italian provinces the Church was to be compensated by the erection of a Catholic Empire in the New World, pledged to uphold her rights and her authority, and to offer a barrier to the American heretics. And that was what Eugénie saw in the enterprise. "I don't apologize for Mexico," she stoutly maintained when an old woman of seventy. As to Napoleon, he acted in this, as in all things, from a variety of motives. He never had sufficient faith in any one of his ideas to act upon it only. Nursing an ideal, like his Beauharnais grandfather, he was for ever, like the Bonapartes, trying to justify it by policy. In fairness to himself, he might have advanced the opinion he ventilated to Prince Albert—that the Powers might find a profitable outlet for their energies outside Europe. Again; if the Austrian Emperor approved his brother's nomination to the projected throne, he might be asked to cede Venetia to Italy in return. Finally, the Mexican monarchy would mean another youthful dream realized; and no idea which had once taken root in Louis Napoleon's mind was ever allowed utterly to die. "I seek in vain," writes Ollivier, "for any great idea in this enterprise." There was in it, at any rate, something spacious and picturesque; but without the desire to humour his wife, Napoleon would never have embarked upon it. She was to have her Mexico as he had his Italy.

At the beginning, notwithstanding, he pursued the

one scheme with as much diligence as the other. When, three weeks later, Hidalgo broke in upon him at Compiègne with the tidings that the Archduke had agreed to accept the Mexican crown, on condition that he should be invited by a substantial part of the inhabitants and that he should be supported by the two great naval powers, the Emperor sat down and wrote at once to the Prince's father-in-law, Leopold of Belgium, engaging his support, and to Flahault (his mother's one-time lover) now ambassador in London, to sound the British cabinet. The Nestor of Kings, reputed to be the personification of sterling common sense, approved; the British cabinet did not. Through Cowley, the Emperor was informed that England, while ready to join in an expedition to enforce the claims of her bondholders, refused to be a party to any interference with the internal affairs of Mexico, as resolutely as she would be opposed to any dismemberment of that country for the benefit of her allies. Spain, on the other hand, entered with some enthusiasm into the larger project. She deplored, it was stated, the eclipse of the civilization implanted in America by her glorious ancestors. The mention of the Austrian Prince left her cold. There were already candidates at Madrid. But Napoleon had not yet definitely committed himself to the cause of Maximilian, and having signed a convention with England on the narrow lines laid down by the British cabinet, the two Latin Powers agreed in instructing their commanders that "if the saner part of the Mexican people, weary of anarchy and anxious for good order, should be encouraged by the presence of the allied troops to make an effort to deliver themselves from their actual condition of social chaos, moral support and not discouragement should be extended to them."

Spain has often led one to think that her watchword is "*to-morrow*" where other nations say "*next week.*" On this occasion she certainly wasted no time, but without waiting for her allies landed a force of six thousand

men in December, 1861, at Vera Cruz. This small army was commanded by the redoubtable General Prim, who from conversations he had lately had with Napoleon at Vichy, may have derived the secret hope that he was destined to be the next Emperor. England, only half-hearted, sent a handful of marines, and France, as a beginning, 2,500 men with a few ships under the command of Admiral Jurien de la Gravière. No opposition was offered by the Mexicans to the invaders, and the expeditionary force was presently allowed under a convention to take up its quarters on the higher, healthier ground about Orizaba.

There was no cable to Mexico in those days, and news travelled slowly. Far away in Paris, Napoleon read the alarmist reports of Saligny, his agent at Mexico City, and conceived himself called upon to play the regenerator in the American continent as he had played it in France. Hidalgo had presented to him other Mexican exiles, among them old Guttierez de Estrada, who had originated Maximilian's candidature, and Almonte, another royalist, the son of the patriot Morelos. Listening to them, Napoleon and Eugénie were persuaded, or tried to believe, that there existed a large and influential party in Mexico who would welcome a monarchical regime. The further the Emperor proceeded, the more enamoured of his scheme he became. Apparently, he retained no friendly recollections of the Yankees. Like the English, for that matter, he regarded their civil war with a certain complacency. He wanted them, he afterwards said, to be strong and prosperous, but he did not want to see them control the whole Gulf of Mexico or monopolize the products of the New World. Referring to the stoppage of cotton supplies, he added, "Melancholy experience is showing us to-day how precarious is the lot of the industry which depends for the supply of its raw material upon a single market." He had a vision, this man of many visions, of France controlling a cotton-producing Mexico and competing at

an advantage with Manchester. "The foundation of the Mexican empire," he observed, "will be the most brilliant page in the history of my reign."

Nothing would have disconcerted him more at this stage than the settling of the bill presented to the Mexican government by the allies. And Juarez, the Liberal president, abhorred by Eugénie as the arch-enemy of the Church, was known to be doing his utmost to arrive at some accommodation with his creditors. For this reason, Napoleon, usually suspicious of his half-brother's financial transactions, acquiesced in Morny's proposal to take over the enormous claims of a Swiss banker named Jecker. This swelled the bill beyond all hope of its ever being paid—except as the astute Morny must have calculated, by a government bound hand and foot to France.

The suspicions which this increased demand awakened in the allies were confirmed by the arrival in Mexico, almost simultaneously with heavy French reinforcements, of the royalist Almonte and a few more native reactionaries. They made no secret of their intention to set up a monarchy, and vowed that they acted with the sanction of the French Emperor. Prim, realizing that the crown was not for him, addressed a letter of remonstrance to His Majesty on March 17th, 1862, refusing to abet this conspiracy against a friendly State. Hard upon his letter came the intimation that England and Spain had withdrawn their forces from Mexico and left France to play her hand alone.

"Here we are, thank God, without allies!" wrote Eugénie to the Archduchess Charlotte. Nor could the Emperor have regretted the breach. The continued co-operation of the other Powers would have deprived him ultimately of the exclusive privilege of milking the Empire he had imagined. Seriously misled by Saligny and Almonte, he expected to hear of the entrance of his troops into the Mexican capital and the proclamation of the monarchy. Maximilian, though slow to commit

himself finally, waited with more impatience at Miramar. But when the news did come, it announced the repulse of the French before Puebla and their retirement towards the coast. The Mexican Republicans, whom the refugees had represented as a mere rabble, had worsted the finest soldiers in the world. Angrily, Napoleon applied himself to the business. He called for the map and traced a plan of campaign, exclaiming that operations had been deplorably conducted. He always piqued himself on his genius for detail, and, closeted with the military chiefs, discussed the organization of a new expedition. At the end of November, 1862, Forey, the victor of Montebello, landed at Vera Cruz at the head of an army of twenty-eight thousand men with fifty-six guns.

Delay, though even now he may not have perceived it, was always fatal to Napoleon's purpose. By an odd paradox, he hated to abandon any idea definitely, but unless it could be carried immediately into execution his determination was weakened by a clearer perception of dangers and difficulties. Forey having been despatched, the Emperor had perforce to turn his attention to other grave matters nearer at hand. The Poles had risen against their Russian master, and France expected the Third Napoleon to help these loyal helpers of the First. Torn between his sympathies and his desire to preserve his alliance with the Czar, the Emperor resorted to every kind of diplomatic overture and remonstrance. Russia refused to listen, and none of the Powers was willing to back its remonstrances by the sword. Meanwhile, what was Forey doing? The weeks lengthened into months. The War Minister questioned, took a gloomy view of the prospects, and begged the Emperor, if this second attempt failed, not to make a third. Forey was still before the walls of Puebla. The General sent letters abusing Almonte, and Almonte sent letters abusing him. The Emperor realized that Saligny had deceived him as to the strength of the Conservative party in Mexico and as to the disorganization of the

Republicans. His Majesty's enthusiasm for this transatlantic venture rapidly cooled. His wife, just then, was busy about her other protégés, the Catholic Poles. Napoleon, under the influence of the inevitable reaction, allowed his Foreign Minister to write to Forey, telling him to come to an understanding, if possible, with any faction, even the Republican, which could be relied upon to restore order and could furnish guarantees for the settlement of the debt. Not a word of the Empire or of Maximilian! Napoleon III wanted, as usual, to draw back before it was too late.

But—the letter crossed other letters from the French commander, announcing the fall of Puebla, his triumphant entrance into Mexico City, and the flight of Juarez. More: a junta of notables, presided over by Almonte, had pronounced for the imperial form of government, and a delegation was on its way across the Atlantic to offer the crown to the Archduke.

These tidings made Napoleon look ten years younger. But his elation of course gave way to misgivings. His witchlike old foster sister, Hortense Cornu, always an ardent Republican, burst in upon him with a letter from a friend of hers in Forey's army. The French, it was said, were acting as catspaw to the blackest reactionaries and clericals. The junta of notables was a mere clerical caucus, in no way representative of the nation. Forey was their dupe—his second in command, Bazaine, was more liberal and trustworthy. Napoleon was shocked. It went against the grain to support the Pope's government in Rome; he did not wish to impose another such upon the Mexicans. For this singular Emperor remained at heart a democrat. Obviously, the resolution of Almonte's junta was not to be taken as the voice of the people, which he maintained was the voice of God. He sent Forey a marshal's baton and told him to hand over the command to Bazaine and return to France. Saligny was recalled in disgrace. The French, wrote His Majesty to the new commander, could not remain passive spec-

tators of arbitrary acts repugnant to modern civilization. The election of the Archduke must be ratified by the greatest possible number of Mexicans. I believe in the sovereignty of the people, said Napoleon III to himself as he laid down his pen.

Maximilian of Hapsburg certainly did not, but he acquiesced in his patron's view. The Mexican delegates were told to call again when they could produce a mandate from the nation. The delegates, though they had expected an unconditional acceptance, assured his Imperial Highness that his terms would be complied with. By the butt-ends of French muskets, the Mexican people, they reckoned, could be persuaded to ratify anything.

Now the wind had set in a favourable quarter. Every mail brought news of French successes. In Bazaine, the Emperor told himself, he had found the right man for the job. Presently this commander was able to report that two-thirds of Mexico was pacified, that the supporters of the Republican regime were represented by a few guerrilla bands skulking on the frontiers, and that the mass of the population had given their adhesion to the monarchist junta. But the democrat in Napoleon was still active. What sort of adhesion? The new empire should be founded like his own, upon universal suffrage. To this Bazaine replied that the conditions of the country made a plebiscite on European lines an impossibility, and that it would be fatal to reopen the question which the bulk of the population looked on as decided.

Napoleon mastered his scruples, the more easily because, as he admitted to the English agent from Mexico, Sir Charles Wyke, he had got himself into a tight place. He had himself taken the gag out of the mouths of the *Corps législatif* and his interference in Mexican affairs was the subject of ceaseless and bitterly hostile criticism. He looked to Maximilian to take over his responsibilities; to Maximilian who before he came upon this troubled scene, had readily lent himself to the

designs of the Mexican Imperialists. If Maximilian drew back, then a Spanish prince or the Prince de Joinville would be asked to fill the projected throne, and so justify France's protracted intervention in the far-off land of the Aztecs. The Archduke, whose wife was keener than he to wear a crown, had no real intention of refusing. Charlotte's father, that sage King of the Belgians, did nothing to dissuade him—he believed in the luck of the Coburgs more devoutly perhaps than Napoleon now believed in his star. King Leopold prided himself on his prescience. He was confident that the Confederates were going to win, and thought it foolish of the European governments not to recognize them. The Emperor Francis Joseph, on the other hand, as well as his mother, and Charlotte's grandmother, the aged Marie Amélie, entreated Maximilian to abandon the enterprise. They enlarged upon the inevitable weakness of his position and the invincible hostility of his powerful neighbours, the Yankees. The Austrian cabinet formally dissociated itself from the scheme and hinted to the Emperor of the French that there could be no question of surrendering Venetia in gratitude for this doubtful favour to a Prince of the Imperial House.

Charlotte stopped her husband's ears to these warnings—as also to the protests of Juarez's secretary, who came to seek him at Miramar. Eagerly the couple responded to Napoleon's summons to Paris. They turned out in truly imperial state. The two Empresses talked Spanish all day. Maximilian asked Napoleon for guarantees. However eager the Mexicans might be to have him as ruler, he was not going to trust himself among them without a bodyguard of French bayonets and a treasury filled with French gold. Napoleon looked down his nose. He would have preferred to do the thing handsomely, but he was no longer free to make the stranger a present of his subjects' blood and money. In the end, after debates in the Council of State and some indirect pressure upon his brother from Morny, the aspirant

to empire got what he wanted. A French army of occupation was to remain in the country till he had constituted a native force for his protection and a loan would be floated under French auspices. But the lender's terms were heavy. The army was to be gradually withdrawn, subject to the proviso that a minimum of twenty thousand men should be maintained till 1867, and that the Foreign Legion might then be taken into Mexican pay and remain six years longer, but the new empire was saddled with the debt which had been the original bone of contention, and on the top of this with the cost of the expedition and the upkeep of the army of occupation. Maximilian, in haste to wear a crown, agreed, though he must have been aware that he had started by ruining the unfortunate country to which he was presented as regenerator.

"You may rest assured," wrote Napoleon when these matters were settled, "that my support will not fail you in the fulfilment of the task you have so courageously undertaken." He was, however, so anxious to pass on his liability, that when Maximilian, required by his brother to renounce all rights to the Hapsburg succession, lost heart and decided at the eleventh hour to draw back, he sent General Frossard to insist upon the fulfilment of his promise. "What," asked Napoleon, "would you think of me if once you had arrived in Mexico, I were to say that I could no longer carry out the obligations to which I had set my signature?" At last the telegram came, announcing that Maximilian had definitely accepted the crown and had sailed with his wife for the promised Eldorado on April 14th. The French Emperor rubbed his hands together gleefully. "Now," he wrote to his Finance Minister, "we shall be able to effect a reduction of taxation, thanks to the happy solution of the Mexican affair."

The solution came three years later, and it was no happy one. Not for a day during that long agony was Napoleon permitted to forget his responsibility towards

the Empire he had called into being. Maximilian, as well-meaning a prince as ever wore whiskers, managed like his patron to antagonize by turns the Clericals, who had built their hopes upon him, and the Liberals, whom he tried to conciliate. Napoleon, and still more Eugénie, was prodigal of advice, which in course of time became rebuke. Meanwhile, a quarrel developed, as anyone might have expected, between the titular Emperor and Bazaine, the prop of his throne. The military situation grew worse instead of better. The French might pursue the Republicans, but they could not exterminate them. The fall of Richmond sounded the knell of the Mexican Empire. The victorious Federals lined the Rio Grande, cheering on Juarez and threatening the European intruders. The United States government refused to recognize Maximilian; their ambassador in Paris adopted an insolent and menacing tone. Before he died the old King of the Belgians heard the triumphant screech of the eagle which he had expected to see torn irrevocably asunder.

The French people, so many of them now Republicans at heart, like the Mexicans, looked on and wondered when they would ever finish with the distracted country. At last, on January 15th, 1866, Napoleon wrote to Maximilian, "The impossibility of obtaining fresh subsidies from the *Corps législatif* for the upkeep of the army in Mexico and Your Majesty's admission that you are not in a position to contribute to it yourself, force me to set a definite term to the French occupation." A week later, in a speech from the throne, the Emperor announced the early withdrawal of his troops. He was so disgusted with the Mexican business that at the Tuileries they feared to speak of it. The letters exchanged between the two sovereigns, real and nominal, became recriminatory. The Empresses adopted the same tone. Maximilian hadn't shown sufficient energy; Napoleon hadn't fulfilled his engagements. In point of fact, he had—but the Emperor of Mexico had failed to execute

the financial obligations into which he had so rashly entered. Even so, Napoleon, always good at heart, could with difficulty resolve to abandon him. He sent General Castelnau to report on the situation. And Castelnau advised evacuation.

There was no hope of raising a Mexican army to take the place of the French. To force Maximilian to abdicate was the kindest course to take. There were those about the person of the luckless Prince who said so, too. The Empress Charlotte was not among them. Adjuring her husband to stand firm, she sailed for Europe, to try a last appeal to the arbiter of their destinies. Napoleon, in consternation, pleaded sickness and tried to put her off. He had to see her, at last, and she reminded him of his promise not to fail her husband in the accomplishment of his task. Eugénie, standing by, must have recalled that other too generous half-promise "to free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic." The angry, desperate Charlotte came again. The scene was so painful that Eugénie took refuge in a faint. When Napoleon returned the visit at the Grand Hotel, with the intention of telling Her Majesty that his decision was irrevocable, she fenced and forced him to take his leave without having pronounced the fatal words. Next day he tersely communicated them to her by letter. She wrote to her husband: "He is the Devil—I know it." She went on her way to Italy, still muttering about the Devil who reigned over France. Throwing herself at the Pope's feet, she implored him to save her from those who were trying to poison her. She refused to leave the Vatican. When they got her home, she abstained from all food and drink, rushing down at last to the fountain of Trevi to quench her thirst. . . . Her kinsmen were sent for, then medical men. The Empress Charlotte was mad.

Napoleon could do no other. The Americans were threatening him with war; the French nation demanded the recall of their soldiers. In spite of persuasions,

entreaties and threats, Maximilian declined to leave the country of his adoption. On March 11th, 1867, Bazaine and the last French regiment sailed from Vera Cruz.

On June 30th, while the Empress Eugénie was dressing for a prize-giving, some one told her that it was announced in a Belgian newspaper that the Emperor Maximilian had been captured and shot by Juarez. Napoleon, pale and anxious, said the report might be false. His wife went through with the ceremony, but had to be carried fainting to bed. Within an hour it was known that the news was true.

Thiers, who cared nothing for the dead Prince, compared him to the Duc d'Enghien, and predicted that the contempt of the French people would overthrow the Empire. Napoleon and Eugénie, writing to Francis Joseph, spoke of themselves as indirectly responsible for his brother's death. But the Archduke had favourably considered the project and conditionally accepted the Mexican crown at least a year before Napoleon agreed to support him. He was warned before setting out that the French troops could not stay later than the year 1867. It was by refusing to abdicate that he signed his death-warrant. His fatal obstinacy seems to have been partly due to his brother's intimation that, should he return to Austria, he would not be allowed to retain the imperial title. Those, wise after the event, who throw the blame upon Napoleon, forget that the success of the Confederates would have assured, for a time, at least, the existence of the Mexican monarchy, and that the shrewdest statesmen in Europe, with a few exceptions, regarded the disruption of the United States as inevitable. Napoleon's brief experience of New York society in the thirties inclined him to that view. The fate of the Mexican Empire was decided on the battle fields of Virginia and Georgia.

At that time, too, as often since, the Republican form of government was held to be discredited and obsolescent. The crowned trustee of the Revolution warred

against it. But the Republican ideal showed, as it continues to show, an aggressive vitality. It was a very real thing to the despised Mexicans. The foreign Prince offered them law and order, peace and plenty; but they preferred liberty—even in theory. After all, even the most corrupt and tyrannical President claimed respect only as the elect of the people, not as a being superior to them and divinely appointed to rule. And to that ideal of liberty the Emperor found himself impelled to give expression in France.

THE EMPEROR AND EMPRESS IN 1865

BOOK III

THE LIBERAL EMPEROR

I

NAPOLEON busied himself writing a life of Julius Cæsar, interrupting his task now and again, as he would smilingly remark, to make history himself. Thanks to Le Bas, he read Latin easily and knew some Greek. On most days, wearing a large top-hat of a fashion set long ago by his friend d'Orsay, he went for a short walk in the Tuileries gardens, leaning on the arm of an officer. Only very seldom did he exchange a word with his companion. Every day he talked less. In the evening he entered his wife's room, smoked a cigarette or two, then passed over to a table and began to play patience, listening but not talking. The sight of his son alone appeared to give him delight; though he found pleasure in the arms of Marguérite Bellanger. Not only care gnawed at his vitals—an internal disorder, which he did not then know to be the stone, left him no peace.

He was ageing, ageing fast. Well on the way to sixty—the senile sixty of Victoria's day—he hoped to make up for what he lost in vigour by accumulated experience and enhanced sagacity. What he should by now have recognized as his most dangerous weakness, he most relied upon. Act cautiously—go slow—look before you leap—these were the admonitions he addressed to himself. "Why are you always in a temper, Persigny?" he asked. "And you, sire—why so seldom?" came the

response. He was frightened of being carried too far by his own desires, his own ambitions, even his own policy. He would steer a crafty course according to reason.

Eugénie was losing faith in his statecraft. He had promised that he would never abandon the Pope, and she had promised there should be no more scenes. Her supreme concern was for her child. To propitiate Heaven, she not only backed the Roman Sovereign, but invited her sister Queens to contribute towards the erection of a new church for all creeds upon the site of the Holy Sepulchre. The scheme fell through, perhaps because the other Christian Princesses felt easy as to their souls and their dynasties. Queen Victoria would have nothing to do with a project so patently Popish. But while trying to placate the Deity, the Empress relied not a little on her own wits. She was seen more and more often at the Council Board, despite the black looks directed upon her by Plon-plon and Persigny.

"I am the master," said the haggard man at the head of the table. But Morny and Gramont, looking at those sagging shoulders, wondered whether the time had not come to lighten their heavy burden. There was this to be said for parliamentary government, they argued—the blame for any disaster could be shifted on to the shoulders of the ministers or the heads of parties while the Sovereign continued to smile benignly down, like the sun from behind the clouds

But Napoleon III continued to dislike parliamentary government. He still believed in his own wisdom, and conversations with such men as Thiers perhaps made him chary of handing over to the bourgeoisie the destinies of his poorer subjects. Another design had long been in his mind. It had been revived by the Emperor of Austria's taunt that his subjects were quite as free as the French, and by the complaint of the French themselves that they were at least as worthy of constitutional liberty as the Italians embraced in the parliamentary

system of Sardinia. When he had promulgated the constitution of 1852, Napoleon had been careful to say that it was an instrument capable of development and contained the germs of a larger liberty. To that half-promise, which most people had forgotten or misunderstood, he gave effect by the decree of November 24th, 1860. The *Corps législatif* was granted the right of moving an address in reply to the speech from the throne; a Minister of State was deputed to attend the sittings and reply to interpellations and the debates were to be published. The *coup d'état* was to be wiped out by this *coup d'éclat*. "Well, are you pleased?" asked Morny of Ollivier. "If this is meant as a beginning," replied the professed Republican, "you have established yourselves; if it is meant to be all, you are ruined." That it was only the beginning seemed to many to be proved when a year later, upon the advice of Fould and de Forcade, the Emperor conceded full power over the budget to the representatives of the people.

So far from sheltering himself behind responsible ministers, the Sovereign had thus deliberately exposed himself to criticism precisely when he had most reason to dread it. Indeed, he chose his time so ill that one might suppose he acted at the imperious command of his grandsire's shade. It was, as he ought to have foreseen, the Clericals who eagerly seized the new opportunity for censuring him whom they had once so warmly supported. The Prince President had declared he upheld religion, not as a measure of policy, but because he believed in it. A considerable proportion of Conservatives, on the other hand, supported religion because they identified it with respect for established government and the rights of property. They rallied to the cry of "Law and Order," a watchword as little religious as "Rags and Bones" or "Muffins and Crumpets." They could not and would not forgive the Man of December for having permitted the dismemberment of the States of the Church and with the wrongs of the

Holy Father, like the Holy Father himself, they bracketed those of their Serene Highnesses of Tuscany and Modena. A French bishop clearly indicated His Imperial Majesty to his flock under the description of Judas—and this, too, before the recognition of the Italian kingdom. The simmering vessel boiled over on the morrow of Castelfidardo. There was mourning in the aristocratic faubourg for those who had fallen. Those who had been taken prisoner by Cialdini added on their return fuel to the fire: for had not their captor told them that he had acted with the approval of the Emperor? In the departments the Clericals deserted the salons of the prefects. The warmest friends of yesterday were turned into foes. The *Univers*, the great Catholic organ, attacked the government so violently that it had to be suppressed. Liberals could not but smile. Had not their brilliant colleague, Louis Veuillot, defended the very laws by which he perished? "The secular arm of the gendarme," he had said, "is the best guarantee of the liberty of conscience." And the gendarme had snatched the pen from the editor's hand.

And now the Emperor (no longer compared to Constantine, but to Julian) had by his own act opened a new vent for the Catholics' wrath. To the suave Morny, seated in the Speaker's chair, it must have seemed as though the chamber had revolved around him. From the Right, hitherto so complaisant, came only attack and obstruction: from the Left arose a faint murmur of applause. Keller and Plichon, lately devoted adherents of the autocracy, furiously denounced the impious vacillation of the government. They were backed by a group of manufacturers, who cared little for the rights of the Pope or the wrongs of the King of Naples, but who had been badly hit by the commercial treaty with England. Ollivier and his four colleagues of the Left counted, with amused amazement, no fewer than ninety-one members on the benches opposite, solid in their opposition to the imperial government.

Napoleon, so slowly moved to anger, was stirred at length to reprisals. The prefects were ordered to enforce the letter of the law against the religious congregations and no longer to turn a blind eye to the transgressions of the clergy. Persigny, once more Minister of the Interior, complained of the ingratitude of the Church party, and told his underlings to shed their black garments. Prefects and sub-prefects might now safely lie abed on Sunday mornings while the faithful went to Mass. The Emperor himself ordered his Minister of War to reprimand an officer who had made a semi-official visit to a particularly truculent bishop. But he knew he was strong enough to ride out the storm. The Clericals could not do without him, and they knew it. They quieted down upon his solemn assurance that he would never allow the Italians or any other Power to dispossess the Pope of his city of Rome. As to the common people, they remembered that Napoleon had specially appealed to the Parliament to reduce as far as possible the duties on food stuffs. Jacques Bonhomme was shrewd enough to prefer his own interests to those of the Italian Princes. And though Catholics and Republicans alike cared for Poland, they did not want to see France launched into war on her account. At the elections of 1863, although the strength of the Left was raised to twenty and the reappearance of Thiers heralded the revival of a Liberal opposition, two hundred government candidates were returned.

The Emperor's concessions to liberty were justified. Making due allowance for Persigny's unscrupulous jerrymandering of the constituencies, he could assure himself that the country was solidly with him. And as his vigour declined and affairs became every day more vexatious, he might safely have advanced on the line traced by his brother. Morny, distrustful of the influences round the throne, and foreseeing, perhaps, his own early departure from the scene, made successful overtures to Ollivier. In the Republican deputy he saw the

minister who might share the Emperor's burden and control the only really dangerous elements in the chamber. Ollivier's conversion was effected by the introduction of a Bill permitting labour unions; a measure which he accepted, to the great disgust of his colleagues, declaring he was willing to co-operate with any government that sought the welfare of the people.

But Morny died in 1865. Napoleon and Eugénie mourned him sincerely. Hortense's unacknowledged son had directed the *coup d'état*. He had made the Empire; not impossibly he might have saved it. The loss was all the greater, since Napoleon did not like new faces. He was reluctant to trust to any but the friends of his youth. And—"*Il n'y a pas d'hommes de rechange*," said Prince Napoleon gloomily. Notwithstanding, Persigny was made a duke and placed on the retired list. He had compromised the government badly by his jobbery during the elections. His animosity towards the Empress he did not strive to hide. A letter in which he urged the Emperor to banish her from his councils sealed his political doom. Another loss was Billault, the spokesman of the government in the *Corps législatif*. His place was taken by Rouher, a burly domineering man, who carried things with a high hand and undid all the good that had been done by Morny. "He is more than a minister, more than a mayor of the palace," cried the exasperated and disappointed Ollivier, "he is the Vice-Emperor."

Napoleon must have winced, knowing that, in fact, virtue had gone out of him. His Liberalism flickered in every wind and flared up fiercely at times like the flame of a guttering candle. But more and more he became obsessed with foreign politics. It was, of course, the Napoleonic tradition that France should sway the destinies of Europe. In his inmost heart Louis Napoleon cherished the ambition of Henri Quatre. Unluckily, when casting about for a stick with which to beat Louis Philip, he had persuaded himself that the French

peasant wanted Glory more than a chicken in his pot, and that France valued Prestige as highly as Prosperity. In this delusion he was encouraged not only by his romantic consort and his strutting courtiers, but by his parliamentary critics. Thiers and his like were not interested in the humdrum details of legal and economic reform. If the Third Napoleon had been confronted by a decided Socialistic Left, with a full programme, he would, either by fighting them or in time by agreeing with them, have been kept clear of the maelstrom of international policy in which he perished.

If he could not leave the silly game alone, at least he should not have let it worry him so much. In the lurid light of after events, his critics are prone to overestimate the importance of the checks his policy received in the last half-dozen years of his reign. Very surely he overestimated them himself. Britain received quite as many set-backs then and since; but Queen Victoria slept not the less soundly, and the Opposition's keenest shafts failed to pierce the thick hides of Her Majesty's ministers, much less to disturb the equanimity of the man in the street. Protesting against the annihilation of Poland, protesting against the dismemberment of the Danish monarchy by the German Powers, England and France were both snubbed and told to mind their own business. "We have threatened Austria," shouted Disraeli, "and Austria is as much concerned as by the sighing of the breeze; we have threatened Prussia, and Prussia defies us; we have rebuked the German Diet, and the German Diet treats us with contempt." He might have added: "What becomes of the prestige of England when she allows the Princess of Wales's father to be deprived of his fairest provinces?" At Downing Street (not then, nor till fifty years later, a branch office of the Quai d'Orsay), they laughed and got on with the next business. At the Tuileries they wrung their hands, heaped ashes on their heads, and bewailed the loss of French prestige. Napoleon, at any rate, acted as if he believed that the peasant

proprietors who constituted at least sixty per cent. of his subjects, had at heart the question of Venetia and the rights of the Duke of Augustenburg to the Duchies of Holstein and Schleswig. Unfortunately, in one sense, they were altogether too well off to undeceive him. A strident bread riot or a mob clamouring for the abolition of the *octroi* might have taught him the common sense of things. Failing these desperate remedies, a more bewitching mistress than Mlle. Bellanger might have distracted that brooding mind from its eternal preoccupation with other people's affairs. After all, Charles II and Louis XV both died in their beds.

It was always one or other of his ideals, unravelling itself like a ball of string, that led Napoleon III into the labyrinth. His infatuation for Italy, like England's more recent infatuation for France, was proof against insult and ingratitude. And the principle of nationalities was a touchstone which he applied to all foreign questions—applied at the beginning and then threw away. Now the German people, it was certainly no secret, had their national aspirations, like the Italians, and to Count Bismarck it seemed that Prussia might do quite as well out of these as Sardinia had done on the other side of the Alps. In the generous Emperor of the French Germany ought to find a sympathizer. At Châlons, General von Roon accepted the Legion of Honour at the childish hands of the Prince Imperial, and expressed to his imperial father the desire of the King, his master, for closer relations. Bismarck had met the Emperor before, and now thought the time had come to take a closer look at him. In '63 and again in '65, he had talks with him at Biarritz—talks which were always one-sided and which the roar of the waves at moments rendered inaudible. They were very different interviews from that of Plombières. There Cavour had come to find out how far the Emperor would help him; Bismarck wanted to know how far it was safe to disregard the man. To English statesmen Napoleon still appeared as the For-

midable, the Inscrutable One—the Sphinx which devoured those that could not read its riddle. To one Englishman, at least, he appeared as "the destined monarch of the world, foreshown in prophecy to confirm a seven years' covenant with the Jews, and (after the resurrection of saints and ascension of watchful Christians) to become completely supreme over England and most of America and all Christendom. . . ." Count Bismarck would have reassured the Rev. Mr. Baxter, somewhat rudely, one imagines. In his imperial host he discerned "a remarkable unrecognized Incapacity." The Empress and the Countess Walewska were the prettiest women he had seen, but he had not noticed any men in France. Napoleon drily remarked that Bismarck was very liberal with things that did not belong to him.

Thus began the duel between the two men—the Prussian who strove for German unity and the Frenchman who wanted to free every nation but his own. At that time the Emperor had no suspicion he had met more than his match. He listened with the silent man's sense of superiority to the other's bluff outspoken talk, and never dreamed that the outspokenness was more misleading than his own reticence.

But why should France oppose the realization of German unity? Goltz, King William's representative in Paris, could see no reason why, and even spoke of an alliance. "No," said Bismarck, this time with honest frankness, "neither country could ever regard the other as a constant and trustworthy ally." Through the shaping vision of German nationality Napoleon perceived the stature of Prussia growing bigger as he looked. Before long its shadow would fall across France. Albert of Saxe-Coburg saw no Prussian danger; Thiers said Prussia's military strength was much exaggerated. Napoleon thought to avert the peril by bargain. He would have done better to reorganize his army and leave the shifty game to one who could play it better than he.

Prussia was preparing to drive Austria out of Germany.

Napoleon tweaked Bismarck's attention, and, as with an apologetic cough, enquired (through the usual channels) what France might expect to make out of the quarrel. The Rhine frontier perhaps? "I don't see why," was in substance the Prussian's reply. "Nor do I," said Napoleon hastily. "After all the Germans have a perfect right to manage their own affairs." Abandoning the thought of compensations for his own country, probably because he preferred to await the issue of the coming struggle with hands unbound, he incited Italy to blackmail Austria by threatening an alliance with Prussia unless Venetia were ceded. Francis Joseph yielded before the threat, but yielded too late; the Italians had already allied themselves with the northern Power and were too honourable to withdraw. Their good friend on the other side of the Alps took care that they should not lose, whichever way the fortune of battle turned—he pledged his neutrality to Austria on condition that the coveted province should be ceded to him. That he should be so solicitous of Italy's interests and so neglectful of those of France has a disgraceful look; but to him the union of Venetia with Italy appeared as the fulfilment of an ideal and the extortion of German territory from Prussia the very negation of that ideal.

At the council board some ministers clamoured for compensations, others recommended a benevolent neutrality towards Prussia. Only Persigny, whose voice nowadays was seldom heard, offered statesmanlike advice. It was known that Prussia intended to consolidate her territory by annexing the small States which cut her into halves. France should let Bismarck understand that she would tolerate these annexations only on condition that small principalities, for the dispossessed sovereigns, should be carved out of the Rhineland. Thus, argued the Duc de Persigny, France would be preserved from the direct impact of a formidable neighbour and might ultimately hope to bring these Rhenish principalities within her orbit. The Emperor seemed struck with the

idea, discussed it next day with Persigny, approved it .... and let it drop. It was better to wait and see what happened. After all, Austria might win.

When he heard that Austria had, on the contrary, suffered a bad defeat at Sadowa, he stroked the end of his goatee and appeared pleased. He had never loved the Austrians, and Italy the Well-beloved would now be mistress of the lagoons. Francis Joseph made haste to cede Venetia, and invited him to mediate. Drouyn de Lhuys and Randon, the Minister of War, did not share their master's disinterested satisfaction. Prussia loomed no longer a mere spectre on the horizon, but a giant, helmeted and jack-booted, across the eastern frontier. The time had come to tell M. de Bismarck that France would tolerate no alteration of the political structure of Germany, and to emphasize this intimation by an armed demonstration towards the Rhine. Eugénie, who saw in a nightmare the Prussians at the gates of Paris, was all for vigorous action. La Valette, on the other hand, maintained that Napoleon at this late date could not take sides with Austria, his traditional foe, and that more could be obtained by friendly negotiation with the victor of Sadowa. The Emperor told Randon to prepare the order for a general mobilization, and when it was brought to him, decided not to sign it. He had no doubt that King William would accept his offer of mediation and then everything would be arranged amicably. If Persigny heard this, he must have remembered how the same man tried to talk over the sentries in the Grand Place at Boulogne, instead of knocking them on the head.

The Emperor, in familiar phrase, had gone all to pieces. "He is like a ship without a rudder," wrote Von Golz. Hating the idea of bargaining, sympathizing with the Germans' aspiration towards unity, having the interests of Italy always in mind, and racked with pain, he entered upon a pitiable course of tergiversation. Too late he proposed to the Prussian ambassador a modifica-

tion of Persigny's scheme. Let Prussia take Saxony and let the King of Saxony have the Rhineland in exchange. Prussia had no designs on Saxony and less intention still of parting with the Rhineland, but Bismarck asked Golz to get Napoleon's consent to the annexation of Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Nassau, hinting that he might have to be content with less. Three hundred thousand extra subjects would be as much as France could safely allow, said Drouyn de Lhuys. Off went Von Golz to St. Cloud. By this time the Emperor had returned to the conciliatory policy. Let Prussia take all she wanted—it was a purely German affair in which he had no concern. Between friends, why talk of compensations? If Prussia had French-speaking subjects—another Savoy, for instance—there would be room for a transaction. The Patron of Nationalities could not demand the forcible transfer of some few thousands of Germans to his sway. Bismarck, it may be supposed, was pleased that he had to do with a mere gentleman instead of a diplomatist. On July 26th, 1866, the preliminaries of the Peace of Nikolsburg were signed. Austria was shut out of Germany; Italy at last got Venice, and France gazed wonderingly across her frontiers at a consolidated and enormously enlarged Prussia.

II

The Emperor went off to Vichy, hoping to obtain from its waters a relief which only a surgeon could have procured him. He may have flattered himself that by his self-denying policy he had made a friend of Prussia, as he had in times past made a friend of England. He was not left long in peace. Rouher wrote that Bismarck required a written confirmation of his renunciation; but the minister informed his master that French public had been aroused by the Opposition Press and speakers

to a clearer perception of the situation and considered themselves cheated. Compensations of some kind were called for. An English statesman would have let the Opposition storm and expend its fury. The French people would not have dethroned Napoleon because France had got nothing out of somebody else's war. In his enfeebled state, the Emperor naturally inclined to take a gloomy view. But he was one of those people who do worse than despair: he believed he could set the clock back and retrieve the irretrievable. Fresh instructions were sent to Benedetti, his ambassador in Berlin. "The Emperor has asked for his pourboire!" sneered Bismarck. The bargaining began again. Rouher, knowing that Prussia would concede nothing of her own, told the ambassador to ask for Luxemburg and to obtain a promise of neutrality in case France might one day find it necessary to absorb Belgium. In return, France would offer no objection to the entrance of the South German States into the new North German Confederation. Bismarck induced Benedetti to put his proposals in writing, to be used on another occasion, and affected indifference to the fate of Belgium. Napoleon had once remarked that Belgium was not a nation, and knew, of course, that at the time of emancipation the Walloon provinces would have preferred incorporation in France; but had the opportunity presented itself he would have been no more capable of seizing the country than of picking King Leopold's pocket. In these hopelessly belated proposals one sees only the man's desperate efforts to persuade himself that he had gained something. To save his face, he pretended that he was ready to soil his hands. The negotiations dragged on, and all that French diplomacy gained in the long run, after bringing the two countries to the verge of war, was the evacuation of Luxemburg by its Prussian garrison and the dismantling of that picturesque fortress.

Napoleon benefited by his cure at Vichy and rallied

somewhat from his depression. The French farmer was more troubled just then by the bad harvests, for which the Republicans could not persuade him the wicked Emperor was responsible, than by the remote possibility of a German invasion. In the summer of '67, when Maximilian faced the firing squad at Queretaro, it could not have seemed to the onlooker that the Empire had lost much in splendour or prestige. Paris was the capital of the world. The Kings of the earth came to shake Napoleon by the hand, and in their train came men of all nations to spend their money and riot in the sensual delights of the French capital. Came the mighty Czar, still looked on as France's best friend, and at the same time, William of Prussia and Bismarck. The Prussian King was genuinely cordial, embracing the frail little Prince Imperial with the tenderness of a born grandfather, and appraising the French army with the generosity of a professional soldier. Bismarck kept his eyes open, estimating rather the harm these people might do him than meditating injury to them. Still, he could not have been ill-pleased when a Polish refugee named Berezowski fired a pistol at the Czar, as the Sovereigns were returning from Longchamps. "*Vive la Pologne!*" cried an advocate in the autocrat's ear, in the corridors of the Palais de Justice. Three years before the catastrophe the Parisians showed more ill will to Russia than to Prussia. Alexander departed in no good humour towards the nation whose sovereign sought his alliance.

William I of Prussia was an honourable and well-meaning man. Napoleon should have cemented the good relations established between them. Instead, he must needs go on a visit to the Emperor of Austria, and to make matters worse, much worse, talk with the Kings of Würtemberg and Bavaria on the way. Naturally, Prussia scented a plot to undermine what she had achieved in '66. The confidence engendered in Paris was destroyed. In vain the French ambassador explained that the Emperor had gone to Salzburg only to offer

his condolences to the brother of the unfortunate Maximilian. It was quite true that no harm had been done to Prussia. From this visit and from the return visit paid by Francis Joseph to Paris resulted only a vague entente between France and Austria, productive in the long run of a fatal delusion.

And then the eternal Roman question was violently reopened. In December '66 the French garrison had been at long last withdrawn from Rome, upon an undertaking by the Italian government to respect the Pope's sadly curtailed territory and to guard it against invasion. This promise obviously did not bind Garibaldi. He invaded the Papal States with an army of Red Shirts. Napoleon should have been glad of this opportunity for showing the mailed fist and snatching a cheap victory. A new expedition was got ready at Toulon and despatched to the assistance of the Holy Father. The Garibaldians were defeated at Mentana. Lying in bed, racked with rheumatism, the Emperor read de Failly's telegram, announcing victory. "The chassepôts have done wonders." But it was in mowing down Italian patriots that the new weapon had done wonders. "Alter that phrase," said the man who had led an insurgent column down the vale of Tiber. But Niel, the Minister of War, took care that it was not altered. He wanted to inspire the French conscript with faith in his new arm, and to convey a salutary hint to other people than the Italians. "Never will France permit Italy to take Rome!" shouted Rouher in the *Corps législatif*, in the teeth of the disgusted Liberals and to the delight of the Conservative parties. "*Never* is an unsafe word to use in politics," said his master sadly.

He was generally sad now. Sixty! and sixteen years an Emperor. To Cardinal de Bonnechose he remarked that high station meant grievous tribulation. At Lille, upon his return from Austria, in a public speech he revealed his disappointment with life. "When I was last at that city, everything went according to my desires. I

had but just espoused the Empress, and could say that I had wedded France herself in presence of eight million witnesses. Order was restored, faction slumbered; for our country I foresaw a new era of greatness and prosperity. But now . . . . I perceive black spots upon our horizon. But I was never dazzled by good fortune, and I shall not be discouraged by passing shadows." "Do not forget," added the Emperor, "that the first essential for a nation is to have a sense of its own power and to rely on the wisdom and patriotism of its own government."

The reminder was needed by the French. Years ago, in a contribution to a local paper, written in his cell at Ham, Napoleon had pointed out the virtues of the Prussian military system. After Sadowa, he had sent a memorandum to Randon, then Minister of War, proposing its adoption in France. Since then the reform had been stubbornly combated, not only by the Republicans, who wanted a citizen army on the Swiss model, but by bourgeois like Thiers, who had been loudest in condemning the Sovereign's weak foreign policy. The idea of universal compulsory service was repugnant to a people accustomed to the chances of conscription and to the immunity afforded to the rich by the system of substitutes. It was not till January 1868, that the new military law was passed, thanks to the vigorous advocacy of Niel. The conscripts henceforward were to be classed in two categories, the first to serve five years in the active army and four in the reserve, the second to serve four years in the reserve only. Able-bodied men who drew the lucky numbers at the conscription were embodied in a new force called the Garde mobile. Another of Napoleon's projects was realized; but, as he was soon to learn, too late.

The idea of "crowning the edifice" of Empire with the cap of liberty still pursued him, despite his false starts and recoils. At the beginning of '67 he sent for Ollivier, who had been recommended to him by Morny.

He offered him the portfolio of the Interior. This the moderate Republican was not yet sufficiently converted to accept. He urged the Emperor along the path of parliamentary reform. "The danger is," said the Sovereign, "that I may seem to be asking pardon for my setbacks in Mexico and Germany." Having pondered the politician's advice, he determined to relieve the Press of its shackles and to extend the right of public assembly. The first measure was strenuously opposed by his own partisans, nor was he more than half-hearted about it himself. "I shall not be offended with anyone who votes against it," he said. But his ministers had orders to pass the Bill, and it was passed. Immediately the Emperor found himself in the pillory. Of all classes, the journalists had been most hardly treated by the imperial government. Now they dipped their pens in gall, and said all that had been saved up these last sixteen years. Acts long forgotten by the general public were raked up and presented in the most unfavourable light. Youth was told all about the *coup d'état*, and learned how the government which commanded its allegiance had seized its power. The most obscure victims of St. Arnaud's volleys were exalted as holy martyrs. Henri Rochefort in the *Lanterne* devoted himself to making not only the Emperor but his wife and Court despicable and ridiculous. Eugénie writhed beneath the lash; her husband was angry. "Everyone may read the *Lanterne*," said a courtier, "but everyone despises it." "That may be," returned the Emperor, "so there are women whom everyone despises, but who are paid court to, all the same." Even the sacrosanct Napoleonic legend was attacked. The idol so long worshipped by millions of Frenchmen was represented as small-minded, tyrannical, incapable, as the author of all the woes of France. Times had changed since *Le Petit Caporal* sold on the boulevards and the workers shouted for 'Poléon.

Times had changed; but not so much as it seemed to the tired Emperor. He studied the signs of the times

too closely—they were magnified by the eye of anxiety, and like so many others, he went far towards mistaking the opinion of the Press for the opinion of the nation. The influence of the newspapers, at least of the Opposition newspapers, did not extend much beyond the artisan classes in the large cities. Yet France was made to appear palpitating with unrest. Thiers made the most of the Sadowa failure and (paradoxically enough) of the government's new military law. Ambitious idealists and survivors of '48 preached the Republic. In the spring of '69 there was rioting in Paris for the first time since that memorable December. Well might the Imperialist stalwarts, in their cave in the Rue de l'Arcade, deplore the Liberalizing tendencies of their master and declare that he had given a free rein to faction. For though, thanks to the Press, at the elections of 1869, the strength of the Opposition parties, especially in Paris, was enormously increased, the government still had a majority of well over a million votes.

However, the results confirmed the timid Sovereign in the course of conciliation. The hereditary bias within him was not to be resisted. Moreover, the burden of authority was becoming, as his half-brother had predicted, too heavy for this sick man of sixty-one. He knew that he was popular, but his agents were not. Men, capable men, were lacking. "We have administered the country sixteen years," wrote Conti, the Emperor's chief secretary, "and we have not succeeded in raising a fresh generation of politicians." Even Persigny wrote, "The rôle of the men of December, such as I, is finished." No one thought the Emperor would live much longer. No one supposed his authority could be exercised by a woman and a child. These must have been his own constant reflections; nevertheless, when the Council of State laid before him a petition signed by one hundred and sixteen deputies, asking for constitutional reform, the usual reaction was observed. The petition, he said, was itself unconstitutional. He glanced at the proposals.

"These gentlemen," he said, "want to cut the old lion's teeth and claws, and leave him only his pretty mane." To Duvernois, he said, "They want to put me up against the wall."

He was merely irritated, perhaps, that his own action had been anticipated, and that he was asked to give when he would have given spontaneously. But he could not, on that account, refuse the reforms which were definitely promised in July and were presently embodied in a senatus consult. The *Corps législatif* became a parliament of the ordinary type, with full powers to initiate and amend legislation. Deputies were eligible for office. Ministers became responsible to the two chambers, though (the senatus consult affirmed) they depended on the Emperor —in other words, they did not constitute a cabinet after the English pattern. But Napoleon III reserved to himself "the prerogatives which the people had expressly confided to him and which were essential for the protection of order and society."

Parliament was prorogued while the new machinery was being got ready. In the interval, the Emperor faltered. His henchman, Rouher, had been translated from his sphere of usefulness to the dignified impotency of the Upper House, but the first cabinet chosen by the Sovereign under the new regime inspired hardly less distrust than the veteran Minister of State, on the Liberal side. The Republicans scoffed at the reforms and refused any confidence to the Emperor. "There can be freedom only under the Republic." Groups of rioters could be seen from the windows of the Tuileries. They were dispersed by the police, with the aid of the neighbouring shopkeepers. For a while Napoleon played with the idea of a backward step. Rouher declined to be a party to it. The Empress has gone to Egypt, to open the Suez Canal—the work of her kinsman, de Lesseps. Not at all in love with the new order of things, she urged her husband, notwithstanding, to persevere. "In spite of all, do not be discouraged, and continue in the

course you have inaugurated. A *coup d'état* cannot be made twice in one reign. The more strength may be needed in the future, the more important it is to prove to the country that we have ideas and not merely expedients."

This was the letter of a stateswoman. Resolutely Napoleon turned his back on the past. After all, whose throne was more secure than that of Queen Victoria? What Sovereign enjoyed more influence and popularity than his quondam ally, Victor Emmanuel of Italy? The thing now was to find a capable minister. Napoleon sent Duvernois to St. Tropez, in the Var, to fetch Ollivier. The deputy came to Compiègne, more or less disguised by wearing a muffler and having left off his spectacles. The talk lasted from eight till midnight. The two men came to like each other, but as the Emperor could not make up his mind to part with all his actual ministers, Ollivier went back to St. Tropez. "Can't you find some men for me?" He did not want Thiers—he wanted men who really cared for the people. "I made the mistake of having begun with the old Rue de Poitiers," continued His Majesty. "I don't want to finish with the new one." Ollivier replied that he had no men to offer. "Appeal to the young," he said. "They alone can save your son. Otherwise you will perish of exhaustion." The Sovereign who had reigned as autocrat for eighteen years was not displeased by this frank language. On November 29th he opened parliament. "France," he declared, "desires liberty, but she also desires order. For order I will answer," he said, as a listener noted, with somewhat of a German accent. "Help me to establish liberty." A month later he dismissed his Conservative ministers, and summoned Ollivier to form a ministry. It was the beginning of the short-lived Liberal Empire.

Ollivier became keeper of the seals and took for himself the portfolio of Justice. Five of his colleagues he drew from the Right Centre, the most powerful group

in the Chamber, but to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance, he appointed Daru and Buffet, of the Left Centre. The Ministers of War and Marine, strangely enough, were excluded from the cabinet. The Sovereign thus early gave proof of his loyalty to the new system of government. Asked if he would approve the inclusion of Clement Duvernois in the ministry, he replied, "Everyone knows that Duvernois makes himself, in a sense, my own mouthpiece. By having him for a colleague you will weaken the public's confidence in your independence."

Ollivier was, on the whole, the best selection Napoleon could have made. His foreign policy meant the acceptance of the status quo, though he was in general sympathy with the principle of independent nationalities. Unfortunately, as it turned out, he saw no immediate need for strengthening the army. Like the Emperor, he gave an intellectual assent to the Republican theory; but like him, again, he believed before all things in seeking the welfare of the people. The two men might very well have worked for many years in harmony and done great good. In this posture of affairs, so favourable to the continuance of the Bonaparte dynasty, the doctrinaire Republicans heard with delight that a young man named Victor Noir had been shot and killed in a scuffle by Prince Pierre Bonaparte, a disreputable and scarcely recognized cousin of the Emperor. "Who could have dreamed," shouted the enemies of the throne, "that a Bonaparte could be anything but an assassin?" But Pierre Bonaparte was not an assassin—he had shot Noir in self-defence. So at least thought the jury at Tours, which acquitted the Prince. The Republican chiefs did their utmost to fan the flame into a blaze. Noir's funeral was made the signal for an outbreak; the troops were held in readiness, the Emperor got into uniform. But the riot did not develop into a revolution. Ollivier, denounced as a renegade, faced the infuriated Opposition. "We stand," he said, "for moderation, we stand for

justice, we stand for liberty; but if you want it, we stand also for force." Napoleon preferred to rely on the will of the people. His new ministry disliked the idea of a plebiscite, as Liberals of the old school generally did. But the Emperor had his way. The question was submitted to the people of France: "Do you approve of the Liberal reforms effected since 1860 by the Emperor with the co-operation of the estates of the realm and ratified by the senatus-consulte?" As he had done the eve of Strasburg, as he had done the eve of December 2nd, Napoleon went to bed and slept calmly the night before the result was to be declared. The answer of France was: Yes, 7,358,000; No, 1,572,000; blank, 114,000.

Gambetta wailed: "The government is stronger than it ever was!" Other Republican leaders saw in the verdict of the nation the extinction of their hopes, and advised their friends to retire definitely from political life. Was the verdict a victory for the Emperor or for the party of reform? There are good grounds for thinking that the countryfolk, at any rate, voted as they had always voted, for Napoleon Bonaparte. The Arcadians, those fervent Imperialists, must be excused for regarding the monarch's late concessions as entirely gratuitous. The Emperor, too, pondering those figures, must surely have had misgivings whether these last ten years he had not given undue weight to the criticism of individuals and factions. If the question put to France had been simply: "Do you wish the government of the Emperor to continue?" the majority of ayes would in all probability have been almost as great. But if Napoleon thought so, he showed no regrets. Loyally he accepted his rôle of a constitutional Sovereign. His wife appeared no more at the council table. A woman sought her influence and was told she would do better to apply to one of the ministers' wives. A peaceful old age had been promised the Emperor by Ollivier—it would be sweetened by the reflection that he had accomplished most of the things he had set out to do in youth.

III

When the Emperor spoke of black spots on the horizon he was looking towards the Rhine and the Alps. But the cloud which was to burst and overwhelm him loomed up in the least expected quarter—from behind the crests of the Pyrenees.

In 1870, the Spaniards, having expelled Queen Isabel, were still in search of a monarch. There was a party which favoured the Queen's brother-in-law, the Duc de Montpensier, a son of Louis Philip; but Prim, who was at the head of the provisional government, thinking his election would be displeasing to the French Emperor, preferred Ferdinand of Coburg, the father of the reigning King of Portugal. Chiefly because he did not want to forsake his morganatic wife, Ferdinand resolutely declined the proffered crown, and seems to have reminded Prim that in October 1868 Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Signaringen had been mentioned as a likely candidate. The Prince belonged to a remotely collateral and Catholic branch of the royal house of Prussia, and seeing that his brother, Charles, had been helped on to the throne of Rumania by Napoleon, the Spanish statesman thought he might not be altogether unacceptable to France. Benedetti, the French ambassador at Berlin, made known to his court what was afoot. "The election of the Duc de Montpensier," said Napoleon, "would be an affront only to my dynasty—the election of the Hohenzollern Prince would be an injury to France and cannot be tolerated." The attitude of Bismarck upon hearing this might be expressed by a shrug of the shoulders and the indifferent remark, "It has nothing to do with us." Secretly, however, he encouraged Prim to persist; and on June 4th, 1870, Prince Leopold consented to his name being submitted to the Cortes, with the approval of his father, Prince Anthony,

and King William I of Prussia in his capacity of head of the family.

Only by a powerful effort of will could Napoleon III give his attention to this dangerous complication. Suffering as he did, many another man would have abdicated on the spot, demanding only to be left alone with his agony. That very month he was subjected to an examination by the six leading medical men of France. They agreed that he had the stone, but that an operation would be dangerous. Their report was handed in a sealed envelope to Conneau, and their conclusions kept a secret, not only from the Empress, but in a measure from the sufferer himself. "It's rheumatism," he persuaded himself. He had but to hold on another four years, then hand over the sceptre to Loulou, and retire to Biarritz—he would soon get rid of his rheumatism there. Meantime, he must uphold the prestige of France against these troublesome Prussians. "There must be no more Sadowas," said Eugénie firmly.

So said the people on the boulevards. The prefects could not announce any corresponding emotion among the countryfolk. In Paris everyone agreed that the wily Bismarck was endeavouring to reconstruct the Empire of Charles V. Ollivier, very conscious that the Arcadians were watching him narrowly, told Lord Lyons that he was at one with the nation and the Emperor in this matter. Even now, if the matter had been left to the diplomatists, war might have been averted. But Cochery, a deputy, questioned the government as to its intentions. The draft of the reply was discussed in council. Napoleon did not want war; only three months before, when prostrated with pain, he had been surprised into agreeing to Ollivier's proposal to reduce the annual contingent of recruits by ten thousand men. He thought the terms of the reply too strong. The draft was slightly toned down, accordingly, but when the ministers got down to the Palais Bourbon and heard the clamour in the lobbies, they decided that nothing

Photograph by Downey)

THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON III

short of the original terms would satisfy the deputies. On that fatal July 6th the Foreign Minister declared it was true that Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern had allowed himself to be put forward as a candidate for the throne of Spain. The Spanish parliament had not, however, pronounced on the question, and a discussion at the actual moment could therefore serve no practical purpose. "But," the Duc de Gramont continued, "we do not consider that our respect for the rights of a neighbouring people compels us to stand by while a foreign Power disturbs the equilibrium of Europe to our disadvantage by placing one of its Princes on the throne of Charles V. We do not think this eventuality is likely to be realized; but, if it should be, then strong in the support of this chamber and of the nation, the government would do its duty without hesitation and without weakness." Splendid! For fully half-an-hour the chamber re-echoed to the bravos and applause of the people's representatives. At last France had a government which knew how to say No, and to say it hand on sword-hilt.

Napoleon, when those infernal pains gave him pause to think at all, hoped there would not be war, though Eugénie with sparkling eyes was beginning to talk of it as a near possibility, and to rejoice in the opportunity of gaining laurels for her boy's crown. King William did not wish for war, either, though he knew Bismarck did. In reply to Benedetti, the old man stated he had appeared in this affair merely as the head of the Hohenzollern family. In view of France's protests he expected that the Prince would withdraw and he would sanction his withdrawal. On the morning of July 12th Ollivier, jubilant, broke in upon the wretched sufferer at St. Cloud with the news that a telegram had passed over the wires, addressed by Prince Anthony, the candidate's father, to the Spanish ambassador in Paris, intimating that his son's nomination was cancelled. "Peace, peace," shouted Ollivier, telling everybody. "We shan't let it

escape us," he threw over his shoulder to Thiers. Napoleon breathed a sigh of relief.

The Empress read the copy of the telegram. "It's a disgrace," she cried. It would be a pretty thing if Prussia were able to conspire against France as often as she chose, and then walk away without an apology. The Emperor heard that the deputies in parliament and the people on the *terrasses* of the cafés were saying the same thing. Everybody was laughing at Ollivier for taking Père Antoine's intimation as final or binding on his son. This was not the first but the third time that Leopold had appeared on the Spanish stage. Clement Duvernois fired in a question—what guarantees had the government demanded from Prussia against a renewal of the candidature? Napoleon looked weakly at Ollivier. He dared not face the charge of weakness again. The minister went off to see the Prussian ambassador, with whom he found Gramont already in conference. Most reluctantly the envoy agreed to ask his Sovereign for some sort of expression of regret for the displeasure caused France and for an explicit veto upon the candidature. Meanwhile, the Emperor, stung by his wife's taunts, sent word to Gramont, ordering him to instruct Benedetti to make the same request to King William personally.

His Prussian Majesty was taking the waters at Ems. Approached by the ambassador, he said that Prince Leopold had formally retired, that the Spanish government had taken note of his withdrawal, and the affair was at an end. The King's position was that Prussia as a Power was not concerned in the business. With this airy dismissal of the matter Benedetti could not be content. Later on in the day his insistence wrung from the King a further declaration, presented by Prince Radziwill: "His Majesty gives his unqualified approbation to Prince Leopold's withdrawal. He can do no more." By this time William had received Werther's despatch, by which he was sorely nettled. "They want me to sit on the stool

of repentance," he wrote to his wife. Bismarck, too, hearing what was going on at Ems, entreated his master to let him have the handling of the thing. Accordingly, when Benedetti, obedient to his instructions from Paris, asked for an audience, he was told by an aide-de-camp that the King could not grant it, that he had nothing further to say, and that any negotiations had better be conducted through the ministers.

In Paris, Napoleon and Ollivier were still hoping that the trouble would blow over. They wanted to soothe France's amour propre, and seized on the King's positive approval of his kinsman's withdrawal as a satisfactory salve. On the guarantees, whatever they had meant by them, they were not disposed to insist. In this temper Ollivier was surprised by Gramont with the heated announcement: "Behold a man who has had a slap in the face!" The Keeper of the Seals read the telegram in his colleague's hand. From the French embassy in Berlin, he learnt that it was reported in the *Norddeutsche Allegemeine Zeitung* that upon being asked by the French ambassador to give guarantees that he would refuse his consent to the candidature of Prince Leopold should it ever be revived, "His Majesty the King of Prussia had declined to receive the ambassador and had informed him through the medium of an aide-de-camp that he had nothing further to communicate."

This was Bismarck's skilfully edited version of his Sovereign's despatch from Ems. While Ollivier stood, trying to realize exactly what it was intended to convey, the Prussian ambassador called to take his leave. He had displeased his government by transmitting the French demands and had been ordered to take a holiday. At the council which was immediately convened, Ollivier proposed to ignore the insulting paragraph, and facing the excited deputies to declare that the Hohenzollern candidature had been officially withdrawn and the incident closed. "The ministry will, of course, fall," said the courageous minister, "but if the Chamber insists

upon a war, Your Majesty will at least be cleared of all responsibility for it." "No," said the Emperor, "it is not at such a moment that I can spare my friends." Never, indeed, had he more need of them! While his realm was threatened by foes yet distant, devils seemed to be already possessed of his own body and to be gripping his entrails with pincers. He was no longer capable of captaining the ship. Gramont let drop the word "congress." The monarch's bloodshot eyes lit up. "Yes, a congress," he echoed. Then—was it the relaxed tension or a fresh spasm of anguish?—a tear rolled down his pale cheek. He took Ollivier into his study to draft the new statement to the *Corps législatif*. Before he left the Tuileries, he sent a note to Lebœuf, directing him to suspend the mobilization.

"Do you think that solution will satisfy the nation?" cried Eugénie with intense scorn when he acquainted her with this new plan. There were not wanting others to hint that if he did not wipe out Prussia's insult in blood he might as well abdicate for himself and his son. For himself, he cared little—life had become a torment—but the honour of France was in his keeping. He wavered. Still, when the council reassembled that evening at St. Cloud he began on a pacific note. Overtaken by a paroxysm, he laid the paper on the table, and left the room. When he returned half an hour later the Empress had prevailed with the councillors. The Emperor called for a vote. War was decided by a majority of four. The paragraph in the German Gazette had become known by this time to the diplomatic agents all over Europe. While Ollivier, in spite of the remonstrances of Thiers, and amid the frantic plaudits of the majority, declared that he accepted this war with a clear conscience (or, as he unfortunately phrased it, with a light heart) old Cousin Mathilde forced her way into the Emperor's study. "What's this I hear," she demanded, "of war and of your taking the command in person?" "That is quite right," was the sad reply. "But," cried

the old lady, looking her one-time suitor up and down, "you cannot travel in a carriage without suffering, let alone sit on a horse. What would you do in the day of battle?" The Emperor protested that he was not so ill as he looked. "If you don't believe it, look at yourself in the mirror!" persisted Mathilde. "I am not a beauty, I know," said her cousin, "but I shall manage somehow."

He was going to do what France ordered, with the resignation of any conscript. A still tongue does not always indicate a wise head; but, reticent as ever, Napoleon uttered no word of discouragement or dismay. There was always a hope of victory. For a long time past he had had grave doubts as to the preparedness and efficiency of his army. But he had had the same misgivings at the opening of the Italian campaign; so far the Prussians had only been seriously matched against the Austrians, whom anybody could defeat. Perhaps he trusted a little to his own generalship, unaware how greatly his powers had deteriorated. Above all, he clung to the hope of the armed assistance of Austria and Italy. Gramont, too, believed he had his sheaf full of alliances, contracted between Sovereign and Sovereign before the appointment of responsible ministers. Since the interview with Francis Joseph at Salzburg there had been "military conversations" at Paris with the Archduke Albrecht, the victor of Custozza. The plan was that three armies, French, Austrian and Italian, each a hundred thousand strong, should simultaneously invade the south of Germany, in order to cut off the Southern States from Prussia. Beust, Austria's Saxon Foreign Minister, certainly favoured an alliance with France against his life-long adversary, Bismarck. His master thought otherwise. To General Lebrun, Francis Joseph said, "I want peace. If I were to declare war at the same moment as the Emperor Napoleon, Prussia would work upon the sentiment of my German subjects. But if France were to enter Southern Germany, not as an enemy, but as liberator, then, on the contrary, I should find myself

obliged to make common cause with her." This explanation should have prepared Napoleon for Beust's protest against what he considered France's precipitate action, followed at last by a regretful declaration of Austria's neutrality. Francis Joseph was merely imitating Napoleon's own tactics in '66—he was waiting to back the winning horse. On Italy the French Emperor had a better claim. Victor Emmanuel and his Prime Minister, Visconti-Venosta (a Lombard) were disposed to help their old ally. The Italian people, generally, however, outside Lombardy, could not forgive the French Mentana. In any case, said Visconti-Venosta, Italy had no available forces. At a later date Crispi declared that she couldn't place so many as fifty men on the other side of the Alps. Mere excuses, wrote one of the friends of France disgustedly: "Prussian money has not been spent in vain either in Italy or in Austria."

"I know mankind," Napoleon had often boasted. He knew then that a signal victory would mobilize the forces of both Powers and speed them to his aid. But, worn out by constant pain, he felt his hopes sink lower and lower. He would have smiled wanly if you had spoken now of his star. He was over-old to hazard all his fortunes—and those of a great nation—on the dice of war. "I'm old, Marshal," he complained to Randon; "almost an invalid, hardly in a condition to take the field." So he staggered backwards and forwards, a prey to the direst foreboding, but resolved to give his last breath for the country which had acclaimed him as its chief. On the morning of the day fixed for his departure, beholding himself abandoned by Austria and Italy, convinced that his army was unprepared, he spoke wildly of making a final appeal to King William in person. When they told him it was too late, he rallied, shook hands with his ministers, saying, "I leave under favourable auspices," and with a forced smile on his lips, went down the steps of St. Cloud for the last time. He wore the uniform of a general of division. With him went

his son, dressed as a lieutenant of grenadiers, smiling, but with the trace of tears on his young cheeks. At the private station in the park of the palace, under a lightly clouded sky, the Empress knelt, and, tracing the sign of the cross on her boy's forehead, enjoined him to do his duty. The Emperor's wandering gaze took in the scene, the weeping bystanders. One of his ministers, at least, found the departure of the Sovereign to take command of his army, not merely sad, but lugubrious. The train started. Napoleon from the window called an adieu to one of his chamberlains, whom he had till then overlooked. The train circled round Paris. Napoleon guessed, and the Prince Imperial little dreamed, that they were looking their last on the city where they had been born and from which the founder of their line had gone forth to exile.

IV

At Metz all was confusion. The Emperor's desk was piled high with telegrams from commanders of corps and divisions, demanding men, horses, guns, munitions, supplies. A score or more of letters, unsigned, warned him that this general was untrustworthy, or another incompetent. Sound elemental notions of strategy, the former cadet of the Federal Military Academy had always retained. His original plan had been to assemble 150,000 men at Metz, 100,000 at Strasburg, and 50,000 at Châlons. Uniting the first and second armies, he would cross the Rhine between Rastadt and Germersheim, and so intervene between the Prussians and their supposedly reluctant allies of Southern Germany. Meanwhile, the army of Châlons, under the command of Canrobert, would move up to defend the north-east frontier beyond Metz. The success of this scheme depended upon being at least a day ahead of the enemy. As he had probably

expected, Napoleon found this plan impossible of execution. At Metz he found not 150,000 but only 100,000 men; at Strasbourg, so far only forty thousand had been concentrated; as to the army at Châlons, it was still in process of formation. A council was called. No one had any alternative scheme to offer. Finally, because the Parisians were waiting for a victory, it was determined to bombard Saarbrücken. This was done; the Prussian garrison evacuated the place; and the French kept to their own side of the border. But the Prince Imperial received his famous baptism of fire, the news of which communicated to the public moved many to a tender admiration and gave occasion to the enemies of the dynasty for a display of essentially Gallic wit. The Emperor watched his son pick up a cannon ball, then turned aside to hide the contortion of his features. "Your Majesty appears to be in pain," said a general. "I am suffering horribly," muttered the sovereign.

To MacMahon, summoned to a conference, the Emperor appeared very downcast. In this mood His Majesty received Vimercati. The Italian proposed that instead of merely withdrawing his troops from Rome, the Emperor should release Victor Emmanuel from his promise to respect the independence of the Pontifical States. Italy would then come in on the side of France. Very coldly Napoleon referred the envoy to Gramont; and Gramont's answer was: "France is defending her honour on the Rhine, she does not propose to forfeit it on the Tiber." Only a week later the King of Italy received another telegram from his old ally: "Vanquished, I can claim nothing. I can appeal only to your friendship and your gratitude."

That friendship did not stand the strain. Already the cause of France was lost. On August 4th the Germans had crossed the frontier and defeated Douay at Wissembourg. On the 7th a telegram from MacMahon was put into the Emperor's hand. It read: "Have been heavily engaged by considerable forces, and have lost the battle."

At that moment another battle was raging within a few miles of Metz; and before evening what might have been a French success at Forbach was turned, by the dilatoriness of Bazaine or his lieutenants, into a serious defeat.

As the Emperor had taken upon himself the supreme command, he was not surprised nor even angry when he found that he was held responsible by the troops for these reverses. Lebrun urged him to resume the control of the government and leave the command of the armies to his marshals. "You think," said the Sovereign, "that having left Paris as the head of the army, I should return, leaving my men behind?" It was not necessary, argued Lebrun, to return to Paris. The government might be carried on from Compiègne or some other place. This was the most intelligent advice given to the doomed monarch throughout the whole of the war. Lebrun ought to have enlisted the support of the Emperor's medical attendants. They should have positively certified him as unfit for the field and ordered him to proceed to Vichy or some other place in the interior. Surrounded by his faithful provincials, Napoleon could have carried on his government and ignored the idiotic dictates of the Parisian politicians. Instead, he stuck by his army, till it was too late to impose the will of the country upon the capital.

Of what that capital was capable he was soon to learn. Because the French soldiers had been outfought by the Germans and because the French generals were outgeneralled by the Prussians, the people on the *terrasses* howled for the blood of Ollivier and his colleagues. Unfortunately they were backed by the partisans of the old despotic regime. Yielding to the clamour from both sides of the Chamber, Eugénie dismissed the able and high-minded Liberal minister and formed a War Cabinet with old Palikao, the leader of the Chinese expedition, at its head. The new ministry discovered that the fatuous populace was disposed to make an idol

of Bazaine. The Empress endorsed the demand for his appointment as commander in chief. Reading her telegram, Napoleon frowned. "We might as well be back in the days of the Convention," he exclaimed, "with delegates telling the commanders what to do!" But he dared not challenge the people in Paris. With a heavy heart, he sacrificed his adjutant-general, the honest Lebœuf, and handed over the supreme command to Bazaine.

His powers as Sovereign he had delegated to his consort; now he was no longer generalissimo. He lingered on four days longer at Metz, within hearing of the guns, refusing to go till he made sure that enough bridges had been thrown across the Moselle to ensure his men's retreat. But for his foresight the catastrophe of Metz might have been anticipated. On August 16th he drove away, looking so miserable that the bishop, who saw him go, remarked that pity for him made him almost a Bonapartist.

MacMahon had led his broken army to Châlons. There the Emperor also found his cousin Plon-Plon and General Trochu. This general, another popular favourite, had been asked by Ollivier to join his ministry. Instead, Napoleon, upon the advice of the Prince, appointed him governor of Paris. At a late hour Eugénie was roused from her bed by the coming of the General, who notified her of his appointment and announced that the Emperor would shortly follow him to Paris. "Only the Emperor's worst enemies could have given him such advice!" she cried. Already MacMahon had given the word for the retirement upon the capital to begin, when Rouher presented himself before the Sovereign. Bazaine had not fulfilled the high hopes formed of him. Heavily defeated before Metz, he was in danger of being surrounded. At this crisis the ex-minister entreated the Emperor to hurry with MacMahon's army to his assistance. By this means only, in the opinion of the Empress and her new advisers, could the desperate fortunes of

France be retrieved. Paris could defend herself against the army of the Crown Prince, which was still a long way off. It was too late, said MacMahon; Metz would have capitulated before he could penetrate the German lines. Rouher returned to the Empress to report failure; but no sooner was his back turned than a vaguely worded message from Bazaine himself caused his fellow marshal to change his mind. He proposed to retreat from Metz in the direction of Montmédy and Sedan. On August 23rd the relieving army began its march towards the north-east to meet him. Nothing else could be done. The chances were at least even of Bazaine's breaking through. In either event, by standing idly before Paris, while his lieutenant struggled for life, Napoleon would have covered the French army with dishonour.

Three days later the Prince Imperial was sent off to Mézières, whence he was later on escorted into Belgium. Plon-Plon had already left for Florence to make a personal appeal to his father-in-law. In Paris the Empress wrestled with the enemies of her son and her husband. Warned off from his own capital, Napoleon went with MacMahon, a mere camp-follower in a gilded coach, drawn by postillions and escorted by his glittering Cent-Gardes. His hair had gone white, and, lest his appearance should frighten the people, he resorted to dye and even, very sparingly, to cosmetics. Now he counted for nothing, and he knew it. "Heavens!" cried a poor woman, when he was pointed out to her, "that wretched looking man the Emperor? Impossible!" At every halting place, night and morning, he was tortured by his surgeon with the probe. From the windows of the humble cottages in which he found quarters he stared blankly at the passing columns. "Your Majesty's dinner is served," someone told him. "Oh, what's the use!" he exclaimed wearily, and fell to pacing the floor like a caged beast or a man that awaits the executioner. Occasionally, as he passed, the field folk would raise a feeble cheer. His soldiers turned on him

cold and suspicious eyes. Discipline was lax. In the depredations of their own troops the people of Champagne had a foretaste of the horrors of war. A drunken man reeled past and growled, "I'd like to bash the Emperor's skull in with my gun!" Did the Emperor hear? He seemed, half hidden among the cushions of his coach, to see nothing, to hear nothing. . . .

There was no sign from Bazaine. MacMahon's army crossed the Meuse. Repeated telegrams from Palikao forbade him to retreat, urged him to hasten. At Carignan the Emperor heard the sound of guns near at hand. At eight in the evening he was informed that the enemy had attacked at Beaumont and had gained another victory. "Impossible!" he cried. "Our positions were magnificent." He had got to go by rail, and at once, to Sedan, they told him. He resisted, but in the end obeyed. Reaching Sedan in the darkness he was approached by an officer who asked him to go on to Mézières. No, he preferred to stay with the troops—with the troops who did not want him, with the officers who looked upon him as an incubus. On foot, walking like a lamed bird, he reached the sous-préfecture of Sedan, his last stopping place on French soil.

While the much-abused Bazaine at least kept his men, in whom he had not overmuch confidence, in comparative safety under the guns of Sedan, MacMahon had led his army into a death trap. Sedan was an obsolete seventeenth-century fortress, dominated by neighbouring heights and in dangerous proximity to the Belgian frontier. He found himself on the very verge of France. Ducrot, his able subordinate, urged him to continue his march to Mézières, where reinforcements under Vinoy awaited him, whence he could retire again, at need, within the circuit of the northern fortresses. In vain; the Marshal decided that his exhausted troops must have a day's rest; nor could he perceive the imminence of the peril. Napoleon, though Ducrot's plan had appeared to him the wiser, gladly clutched at an excuse for a day's

rest. Physical weariness numbed his sense of danger. When an officer, come by rail from Mézières, reported that he had seen enemy forces preparing to cross the Meuse at Donchéry, that is between Mézières and Sedan, the Emperor pointed out on the map a new road running considerably to the northward, which he flattered himself the Prussians had no knowledge of. A telegram from Eugénie's government received a few minutes later steeled MacMahon against too hasty a retreat. His sense of security was not shared by all who should have assisted him. Deserters were already scurrying through the woods in the direction of Belgium and Mézières. A detachment of sappers was sent by rail with orders to destroy the bridge at Donchéry—no sooner had the sappers got out than the engine-driver hurried on with the train to Mézières, taking with him the powder, the tools, and everything essential to the operation. The driver in this followed the example of his superior, the stationmaster of Sedan, who, upon hearing the sound of the guns, panic-struck, ordered back to Mézières a whole convoy of supplies which MacMahon had reckoned upon. And in face of these exhibitions by individual Frenchmen France continues to lay the whole blame for her defeat upon a Sovereign who did his duty when all others recoiled from it.

When the battle began on September 1st with an attack by the Bavarians on the village of Bazeilles, the French army was already practically surrounded except on the side of Belgium. Napoleon called for his horse, Phoebus, and attended by a small staff rode in the direction of the cannonade. A few women in the streets of Sedan cheered him. He motioned them to silence. Presently the shells began to burst around the imperial party. A few yards from the Emperor a captain was killed. His escort, so far as concern for their own lives permitted any disinterested thought, vaguely realized that their Sovereign was seeking death, the death which his uncle had not sought at Waterloo.

Here was a hollow road. Napoleon dismounted heavily and limped unaccompanied to the cemetery of Sedan. He fired a round or two from a mitrailleuse and went slowly back. Lifting his haggard face towards the heavens, he marked the flight of the enemy's shells. They struck others, but they spared him. In such a moment he must have recalled the names of those kings who had fallen in battle. There were only a few—Richard III of England, Sebastian of Portugal, John of Bohemia. . . . For even if the army was actually extricated this day, the Empire was utterly discredited. His death alone whether at the moment of victory or in the agony of defeat, could redeem his failure and cast some last rays of glory upon his dynasty.

Napoleon III did not find death. Animal instinct, as strong in Emperors as in scavengers, no doubt withheld him from pushing himself forward into the front line, of thrusting a bayonet among the flaming cottages of Bazeilles. Nor is it conceivable that his officers would have permitted such supreme recklessness. After all, their Emperor was sixty-two, and of shattered health at that. Fate was kinder to MacMahon. Seriously wounded, he handed over the command to Ducrot. "There is not a moment to be lost," said the new comrade. "We must retreat upon Mézières!" "Retreat!" cried Lebrun in dismay. "At Bazeilles we are beating back the Bavarians!" At this moment a galloper handed a despatch to Ducrot. It was from General Wimpffen, who had reached Sedan the day before, and who now announced that he had orders from the government to assume the supreme command in case MacMahon should be incapacitated. There was to be no retreat—there was to be a victory. Wimpffen galloped across the field and met the Emperor. "Don't worry, Your Majesty," he cried, "in two hours I shall have thrown the enemy into the Meuse."

Napoleon did not believe it. Slowly and reluctantly he was led by his escort back into the town. A shell

burst so near that his horse's nostrils were filled with the dust. In Sedan officers and men were eating their midday meal. Having probably no appetite himself, the Emperor was shocked. Resuming his authority, he issued a stupid order that every man must return to his post in the firing line at once. He was unable to return to the battle field himself. Fugitives were flocking into the town; all avenues were choked. Now from every surrounding height the German artillery directed a plunging fire upon panic-stricken French humanity in the narrow streets. The roads towards Mézières, towards neutral Belgium, were cut. Divisional commanders announced that their troops were in complete disorder: that they could do no more. The battle of Sedan was lost.

Wimpffen would not have it so. He was before all else the captain, caring not at all for his own life or for that of others, aiming only at the triumph of his army. With a stupendous effort he might be able to crash through the encircling hosts and retreat towards Metz, upon Carignan. But Napoleon going towards the sous-préfecture saw men dying all about him, dead men lying everywhere, heard the screams of the wounded. And all the while the guns thundered, every detonation meaning the death of a man or of many men. At a word from the Emperor of the French this carnage would cease. How many women and children were there in France and Germany whose lives, reaching far into the future, would be determined by that word? To go down in a gigantic holocaust with the army of France might be a more fitting end for a Bonaparte, but of such callous courage Napoleon III found himself incapable. He had tried to be the father of his people. He must save them now. While there was yet some hope of glory he had stepped aside and left it to his generals to glean what laurels they could. The humiliation of surrender he reserved for himself. For God's sake let there be an end to this slaughter. He was once more Emperor of the French, and as such he ordered the white flag to be hoisted.

"Tear it down," shouted Wimpffen. Douay and Ducrot rushed to the sous-préfecture. Half-heartedly Ducrot expostulated. "All hope is gone," persisted Napoleon, once more the Sovereign. "I require you to sign the order to cease fire and to send a flag of truce to the enemy." Ducrot would not sign, Wimpffen could not be found. The men went on killing each other. "The fire must cease, the fire must cease," repeated the Emperor. "Too much blood has been shed." With a sombre delight he welcomed two German officers who came under a flag of truce to summon Sedan to surrender. Napoleon sat down and, with a hand steadier than usual, wrote to the King of Prussia: "Sire, my brother, Having been unable to die at the head of my troops, I have no alternative but to place my sword in Your Majesty's hands.—Napoleon."

Nothing in his whole life became him more than that humbling himself to spare the lives of Frenchmen.

The firing ceased. The Emperor waited that day at the sous-préfecture while Wimpffen and Ducrot, most reluctantly, discussed the terms of the capitulation with the victor. They came back when night had fallen over the fields of slaughter. Bismarck and Moltke demanded the surrender of the entire army as prisoners of war. Wimpffen protested and threatened a further effort to break through. "You can't," said Moltke, "In two hours our artillery could annihilate you." At this point, Castelnau, who had hitherto been silent, asked leave to communicate a message from the Emperor. His Majesty had hoped that the King of Prussia would be touched by the unconditional surrender of his sword. This interested Bismarck. "Has the Emperor given up his own sword or the sword of France?" he asked. "If it is the sword of France, your message may have an important effect upon the negotiations." Castelnau was obliged to reply that the Emperor's was a personal surrender. He would not bind the hands of France. That being so, the Germans dismissed the French generals with the

intimation that the truce would expire at nine next morning.

Personal influence always having had a decisive effect upon his own attitude, Napoleon still hoped that something might be gained by a meeting with King William. At six o'clock next morning he drove out towards Donchéry, accompanied by three officers. Expecting to return, he parted from his guards without any adieu. As he drove through the Porte de Torcy a few of his Zouaves cried, "Vive l'Empereur." It was the French army's last tribute to the victor of Magenta and Solferino. Approaching the enemy headquarters, he was respectfully saluted by a group of American military officers, one of them being Sheridan. At the first houses of Donchéry Bismarck rode up alongside the carriage. Napoleon paled at the sight of him—either, as the Prussian statesman thought, because he feared a personal attack, or because, as is more likely, he knew his last hope would be frustrated. Bismarck, indeed, told him at once that the King was a long way off and could not be seen before the hour fixed for the expiry of the truce. For three-quarters of an hour the two men talked in a cottage by the roadside. Unlike Moltke, the Prussian statesman would have been glad to expand the capitulation of the army of Sedan into a peace with France. Napoleon evaded the question. "What can I do, a prisoner of war?" Bismarck considered. "With whom then must we treat?" "With the actual government of Paris," replied Napoleon; he did not say with the Empress or the Regency. Seeing that nothing was to be got from him, the Prussian suggested that he might await the King at the little château of Bellevue. The Emperor realized that he was indeed a prisoner; and instead of returning to Sedan, presently found himself surrounded by a guard of German cuirassiers on his way to the château.

He had not long arrived when Wimpffen came to inform him that the capitulation had been signed. In the court below waited the captive's gaudy travelling

coach, summoned from Sedan, the powdered lackeys and postillions standing amid the curious German soldiers. A tremendous cheering went up when the capitulation was published to the conquering ranks. About three o'clock a fresh burst greeted the King of Prussia. He found Napoleon standing at the entrance to a glass-covered verandah. The old King took the Frenchman's hand and said something about the fortune of war having decided between them. "But," he immediately added, "it's very painful for me to meet Your Majesty in this sad situation." With a friendly encouraging gesture, William of Hohenzollern gripped the broken monarch by the arm and led him into an inner room. They discussed the battle and the origins of the war. The result Napoleon attributed to the superiority of the Prussian artillery, to the unpreparedness and in a measure to the bad discipline of his own army. The war had been forced on him by public opinion. "Yes, but by public opinion exploited by your ministry," interposed the Prussian, who was not a believer in parliamentary government. "I knew things would go wrong as soon as I heard of the change in your method of government." At which Napoleon shrugged his shoulders. "Really, I think I cheered him up," wrote the chivalrous old King to his wife.* Twenty minutes after his departure Napoleon announced to his escort, "Gentlemen, we are bound for Wilhelmshöhe."

That night of September 2nd, 1870, was the last which Napoleon III passed in France.

* We do not hear that any of the Prussians at this juncture raised the cry of "Hang the (French) Kaiser!" though they believed he had wantonly attacked them.

V

Wilhelmshöhe was the palace near Cassel where Jerome Bonaparte had held his Court when King of Westphalia. To reach it the prisoner had to traverse neutral Belgium, having given his word of honour to present himself at Aix-la-Chapelle on a given date. As, wrapped in a hooded cloak, he was driven through the rain towards the frontier, he passed a column of French prisoners. One of the men recognized him and shouted, "You sold us to save your carriages!" Had he refused to capitulate, the Emperor may have reflected, they would have shouted, "You had our comrades butchered to glorify your dynasty!"

So he passed out of France for ever, across into tranquil Belgium. From Sedan he had sped the dreadful news over the wire to Eugénie: "The army is defeated and taken prisoner. I am a prisoner myself." From Bouillon, where he passed the night, in the shadow of the old stronghold of the Tour d'Auvergnes, he wrote to her. Worst of his torments, he said, was his anxiety for her, their son, and the country. "May God protect France! What is happening in Paris?"

Next night he knew. From Libramont, where he had a talk on the station platform with his banished cousin, Pierre Bonaparte, he went on by rail to Verviers. Here he passed the night—a night which was made horrible for him by the arrival of a telegram, tersely worded: "The Empire overthrown, Republic proclaimed, the Empress in flight." The Belgian newspapers next morning brought some relief. The overthrow of his house had been accomplished without bloodshed, and Eugénie was safe with friends in Hainault, as it was erroneously rumoured.

She had, of course, found an asylum in England and was with the Prince Imperial at Hastings. This, and the

story of her hazardous passage in an Englishman's yacht across the storm-wracked Channel, her husband was not to know till later. The details of the Revolution of September 4th came filtering through. Entirely subordinating the interests of her dynasty to those of the nation, the Spanish-born Empress had offered to hand over her authority to the *Corps législatif*, "the only body constituted by universal suffrage." Vainly she asked for the help of Thiers. Changarnier, that other victim of the *coup d'état*, had sought out Napoleon at Metz, and offered him his rusty sword; Thiers, a man of different fibre, crustily recalled his injuries and rejected the Empress's appeal. Those who had no personal quarrel with Napoleon, those indeed who had benefited by his philanthropic legislation, but who cherished the Republican ideal, the workers of Belleville and Montmartre, thronged the boulevards, calling for the abolition of the monarchy. There was one man, at least, whose duty it was, incontestably, to suppress disorder and to maintain the imperial regime—that man was Trochu, on whom, by appointing him Governor of Paris, the Emperor had staked his crown. Now, availing himself of a snub inflicted by Palikao as an excuse, the General ignored the appeal of the woman who had been confided to his protection, and having received his commission from the Emperor, stood idly by while the Emperor was dethroned and the Republic was proclaimed.

It was proclaimed first from the tribune of the *Corps législatif* by Gambetta—a worthier protagonist than Trochu—next and more appropriately by Jules Favre and his friends at the Hotel de Ville. Appropriately, because the Revolution was the work of Paris and not of the nation at large. The Empress went away. Not a sword was raised in her defence. The country accepted, as it always did, the dictates of the capital. France, as in 1852, got a better government than she deserved. Happily, the founders of the Third Republic were not all traitors.

Reading these things in his gilded prison at Cassel, Napoleon perceived, first of all, the ingratitude of a people which disowned him because he had lost a battle. Nothing can be more certain than that the French people urged him to war and that they would have prostrated themselves before him had he returned victorious. In France you are not allowed to fail! But in his downfall Napoleon must have perceived much more than this. He had been overthrown by Liberty, that ideal which he had never himself dared to repudiate, which he had feared and courted by turns, which now showed him an angry and reproachful face. "But I gave them liberty," he might have said. True; but there were Frenchmen who would not take it as a gift from a master, and to whom hereditary monarchy, which sets birth above merit, was in its very essence abhorrent. It was not these men who could be charged with ingratitude or blamed for using the occasion of a sovereign's misfortune. Other Republicans may wish, though, that they had not stooped to impute that misfortune to him as a crime.

So the Second Empire had fallen like the first; and Napoleon III paid, like Napoleon I, the penalty of defeat in exile and captivity. He may have derived some cold comfort from the reflection that Louis Philip, Charles X and Louis XVI ,who had lost no battles, had fared no better than he. At least he was accustomed to a prison and knew the uses of captivity. With him still was Conneau, the ever-faithful Conneau, who had closed his mother's eyes and had shared his not uncomfortable dungeon at Ham. The land to which he was going, an old man and a prisoner, was the land which had received him a child and an exile, fifty-five years before. Of the German people he had kindly recollections; he had no reason to complain of them now. He had brought with him a numerous suite, which included his cousin, Achille Murat, Baron Corvisart, and the Generals Castelnau and Reille. At his uncle's old palace he kept up a modest

state. In Count von Monts, the governor, he found the kindliest and most delicate of gaolers. Augusta, King William's Queen, showed herself most solicitous for the captives' comfort and happiness. Monts, indeed, felt called on to warn Her Majesty that her excessive interest in these enemies of the Fatherland might give offence to those Germans who had lost sons and husbands in the war. But what natural repugnance the people of Cassel may have felt towards the fallen Emperor was soon converted into liking. He was kind, essentially, not merely in order to invite sympathy for himself. A stray dog followed him in the course of one of his daily walks in the park and could not be driven away from the steps of the palace. Hearing the guards proposed to murder the poor animal, the Emperor intervened. "I will pay any sum you like to name," he said, "for the maintenance of the poor beast." In Germany he could freely indulge that tenderness which would have exposed him to ridicule in France. At Christmas he became the Santa Claus to many poor children in Cassel. He praised the custom of the Christmas tree and said that he and Eugénie had made fruitless efforts to introduce it into France. "He's not a bad sort," whispered the Germans to each other.

Oddly enough, too, as the better side of the man's nature became more apparent, so his physical health improved. Monts, meeting him at the station, thought he suffered from nothing more deadly than lassitude. It seemed as if the Furies who had pursued him to his doom had paused to draw breath or gone in search of other quarry. He experienced a brief surcease from the pains in his entrails.

What was to become of France? He could not, if he had wished to, rid himself of the habit of responsibility which had been his for eighteen years. Jules Favre, taking possession of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had rashly declared, "We shall not yield an inch of our territory nor a stone of our fortresses." It was obvious

that there was to be no peace on those terms. "It's a pity," said the Emperor, "that these gentlemen have been in such a hurry to take my place. My intimate associations with the European courts might have enabled me to intervene profitably on behalf of France." He did not think those courts would exert themselves on behalf of the Revolution. Bismarck perceiving the new Republic to be intractable, turned his attention once more to the prisoner of Wilhelmshöhe. Prussia had not yet recognized the government of National Defence, and the possibility of an imperial restoration appeared by no means remote to the Iron Chancellor. There was still the large army of Metz, commanded by Bazaine, who seemed in no haste to transfer his allegiance to the Republicans of Paris. To make a satisfactory peace with the Emperor and then leave him to wage war on his own subjects would suit Prussia very much better than a war to the knife with a new and energetic government. Bismarck hinted as much to Napoleon. Eighty and odd years before, Beauharnais had adjured his wife not to be in a hurry to avenge him, but to consider the interests of the Revolution. Napoleon Bonaparte was not unworthy of his grandsire. He considered that the continuation of the war was at once "a duty and necessity for France," and declined for the time being, at any rate, to enter into negotiations with his captors. On September 21st Bismarck enquired whether he would accept the terms offered to Jules Favre, which meant the cession of Alsace. The reply was that the struggle could be terminated only by the complete exhaustion of one or other of the combatants or by their loyal reconciliation; the Emperor would be disposed to submit to the dismantling of certain fortresses and to an indemnity; but the victor would be wise to show himself generous, for the French nation would never yield to fear. The Stuarts, the Bourbons and the Hapsburgs had all at one time or another consented to be re-established on their thrones by foreign

bayonets. This imperial parvenu of the Bonaparte-Beauharnais stock would not sacrifice a French province in order to recover his crown.

Unmindful of the Empress's patriotic attitude, Bismarck tried to see what he could do with her. In the mystifying intrigue that followed he made use of an officious person named Regnier, who died at Ramsgate in 1886, the keeper of a laundry. By this go-between he was satisfied that Bazaine preferred his sovereign to his country, just as Trochu had preferred the people of Paris to his sovereign. A French officer of the garrison of Metz, after a conference with the Chancellor, was sent to Hastings to secure Her Majesty's approbation to these terms—the army of Metz would be allowed to pass out with the honours of war and to proceed to some place in the interior of France on giving an engagement that it would not take up arms against Prussia and that it would only recognize and support the Imperial Regent. The Empress was at the same time to sign the preliminaries of a peace with Germany and to issue a manifesto to the French people, inviting them to determine the form of their government. The able and high-minded Princess at once saw through Bismarck's design—he aimed at provoking civil war in France in presence of the enemy. She rejected the terms. A week later Bazaine capitulated and his whole army passed as prisoners into Germany. The Empress complained that no serious efforts had been made by the Republican government to relieve Metz. As, according to the French themselves, treason was rife in their ranks, the suspicion might be allowed that to some of the Republican ministers the return to Paris of three marshals and fifty generals of the Empire at the head of a hundred and seventy-three thousand men, would not have been exactly welcome.

France went on fighting. All that Napoleon could hope for now was a movement in his favour among the French themselves before or after the peace. A day or

two after the fall of Metz he was visited by his wife. It was the first time they had seen each other since that mournful departure from St. Cloud. Their greeting struck the bystanders as cold. Perhaps both were too much aware of the onlookers to indulge their real feelings; it is equally likely that the Emperor was still a shade resentful of the Empress's frequent disregard of his authority and her overruling his original plan to cover Paris with MacMahon's army. This coldness, it seems, melted as soon as they were alone together. Probably husband and wife had never been nearer to one another than now when they met dethroned and exiled. The next day she hastened back to her boy in England.

If his friends had not fought for Napoleon III, at least they still loved him. He was not neglected at Wilhelmshöhe. Women whom he had known or loved came to assure him of their devotion, among them the Countess Walewska and the Countess Mercy-Argenteau. Plon-plon he refused to see, because of the Prince's open hostility to the Empress. At his request three of his captive marshals were sent to him. He showed the measure of his regard for each by the manner of his greeting. He shook hands with Bazaine, took Lebœuf by both hands, and embraced Canrobert on both cheeks. He corresponded with true-hearted Changarnier, and for a time hoped great things from his support. Meanwhile, mindful of the precedents of St. Helena, he discoursed freely on the events of his reign and expounded his views on various topics. The chief recipient of what were by no means intended to be confidences was a German Jew named Mels-Cohn, who held a roving commission from *The Times*. The journalist surrendered to his spell and became an enthusiastic partisan. Speaking with Prince Albert, years before, at Boulogne, the Emperor had foretold the rise of Prussia; now with equal prescience, he predicted that all Europe would one day arm against her and overthrow her. The war, he thought, would bring the social question into the fore-

ground. The Emperor lit another of his cigarettes. "Bismarck," he said, "is not interested in it. For that matter, who among the Sovereigns of Europe or in their counsels has ever concerned himself with the working-man? I alone. And if I return to power," he was careful to add, "that would be my first concern."

Another day they spoke of the Press. "Journalism ought not to be a business. The Press should constitute a sort of third chamber, in which no journalist would have a right without a mandate." Dimly, it may be, the Emperor foresaw the day when the newspapers would be merely the organs of certain rich men, confounding the interests of the public with those of their advertisers. His dream of a really national Press is not impracticable. The Press might be organized and newspapers run by duly qualified men, subsidized by, but not directly responsible to, the State. Such a plan would work better than Napoleon's scheme, expounded to Mels, of a great State-owned journal, to which the best writers should contribute, to be distributed free.

Intently, but with fading hope, the prisoners of Wilhelmshöhe followed the fluctuations of the last campaigns in France. Peace, on the basis of the cession of the two provinces, was being debated at Versailles. Since the Republic had failed to save the country, the Emperor bestirred himself. He employed the Countess Mercy-Argenteau and all those of his friends who had the ear of the mighty, to urge moderation upon the new German Emperor. He might save France and his dynasty by the same stroke. To the Countess he wrote (and for other eyes than hers): "If the German Emperor and M. de Bismarck had seriously considered the state of Europe; if instead of letting themselves be dazzled by their extraordinary success, they had resolved to close the era of war and civil strife, they should have refused to concede anything more than an armistice till a strong government based upon the national will had been established; and by making peace with that

government, they would have secured themselves far better than by annexing a few unwilling departments, torn from a distracted nation. That would have been great statesmanship. France's hatred of Germany would have disappeared as by enchantment. Peace would have been assured for many years."

He may have been right; but Governor Monts, perceiving how very much of a Frenchman his prisoner was, believed that had the Emperor been restored, he would sooner or late have embarked on a war of revenge against Germany.

Thiers gave Germany what she wanted, and the National Assembly at Bordeaux decreed the deposition of the Bonaparte dynasty. Napoleon wrote to the President of the Assembly, protesting that he could not be stripped of his powers except by a direct vote of the people, and combating the manifestly untrue allegation that he had provoked the war. The treaty was not yet signed, but William of Prussia had no more use for the deposed sovereign. On March 19th, 1871, Napoleon left Wilhelmshöhe. Travelling by Ostend, he reached Dover the next day at noon. For the fourth time he was seeking an asylum in England. As the white cliffs of Albion dawned on his tired eyes he could have congratulated himself that he had never shown himself ungrateful to this country for her hospitality. Nor was England lacking in cordiality towards her old ally. He landed amidst loud cheering, and won the hearts of the crowd by his passionate embrace of his wife and son. Plon-plon, ever loyal in spite of so many rebuffs and rebukes, was there to meet him, too. Perhaps the discarded monarch felt that he was really coming home. Everything seemed so safe and pleasant as he was hurried across the hop-fields, past the little red-roofed Kentish towns, towards Chislehurst. For it was there, at Camden Place—the house once inhabited by his old flame, Miss Rowles—that Eugénie had made her home.

What was to be done now? The peace treaty was not

actually signed, and Napoleon through his devoted Countess sent word to Bismarck that he would accept it, provided Metz was left to France. The outbreak of the Commune in Paris encouraged the hope that the Germans might concede a point in order to help re-establish a monarchical government in France. On the contrary, they pressed their utmost demands, seeing that their enemy was less and less in a position to resist. On May 10th, Alsace and north-eastern Lorraine were signed away to Germany. "Napoleon III would never have signed such a treaty!" cried Galloni d'Istria, one of the handful of brave men who dared to defend their old master in the Assembly at Bordeaux, in the teeth of an opposition unfair to the point of insanity and violent to the point of blackguardism. Posterity must decide whether the representatives of France appeared worse in the hour of surrender at Bordeaux or in the hour of triumph, forty-seven years later, at Versailles.

Thiers, the bourgeois, who did not believe in social legislation, profited as Napoleon had done, by the eruption of the revolutionary volcano. The Republicans wiped their bloody swords and asked the affrighted people if they had not preserved law and order. They worked on the fears of the bourgeois and the farmer as the Prince-President had done. Peace was what Frenchmen wanted, civil strife between Imperialists or Royalists and Republicans they would not tolerate. But though the verdict of the nation sanctioned, for the time being, the deprivation of the Bonapartes, everyone in France did not desert the man who had failed. There were significant Imperialist manifestations in February, 1872, at the funeral of the brave Corsican, Conti, Napoleon's secretary; again in August at the church of St. Augustin, at the camp of Marne, and in the Eure and the Seine Inférieure. But the Emperor, very comfortable at Chislehurst, among people who liked him, was content to wait the turn of events. He would not, to curry favour with the Liberals, endorse Victor Emmanuel's

occupation of Rome. To his Countess he wrote: "Don't let us talk any more politics, . . . the devotion of my friends enable me to forget the ingratitude of some, the malice of others."

There was talk among his adherents of a dramatic appearance at Lyon, where Bourbaki, still faithful, might bring over the troops to his side. Napoleon III knew he was too old to attempt a return from Elba. The future of the Bonapartes belonged to his son. He talked history and politics to the boy as they paced the long corridor at Camden Place or walked in the grounds. Again, he declared at table, half in jest, half in earnest, that the Empress was a Legitimist and that he was a Socialist. "But who then is the Imperialist?" asked the young Louis Napoleon. "You, my son," was the answer, accompanied by a caress; "You are the Imperialist." To Mels-Cohn, who had followed him from Cassel, he still continued to discourse, and dwelt much on a wild visionary scheme of a supreme council of the nations which he had mooted in 1865. But he was careful that his heir should be brought up as a soldier, all the same. In October, 1871 the Prince Imperial was entered as a cadet at Woolwich.

The summer of the next year he spent partly in the Isle of Wight. The air and ease of England seemed to have done him good; yet walking one day in the little churchyard of Chislehurst, he scratched at the gravel with his cane and said to his companion, "I am wondering whereabouts you are going to lay me presently." Eminent British medical men had discussed his case, and some of them held out hopes of a permanent remedy. He was persuaded, contrary to the advice of the French consultants given in 1870, to submit to the operation of lithotrity. On January 2nd, 1873 the stone which had tortured him was partially crushed. A second operation was equally successful, and by a third, it was confidently predicted he would be freed from his trouble. "That man must have had courage," remarked the surgeon,

"to have sat his horse those long hours at Sedan with that stone inside of him!" The final operation was to be performed at noon on January 9th. The previous night the sufferer had slept peacefully, watched over by Conneau and Filon, his son's tutor. It had not been thought necessary to send for the Prince Imperial, not far away at Woolwich. But at half-past ten the Emperor showed signs of collapse and of losing consciousness. The Empress rushed in "He is dying!" she shrieked. He was. The Abbé Goddard was sent for and administered the last rites of the Catholic Church. As Eugénie bent over him, the dying man's lips moved as though to form a kiss. His mind wandered. Fixing his eyes on Conneau, he murmured, "Conneau, weren't you at Sedan?" In that last hour his memory was of that most dreadful day in all his wonderful life. At a quarter-past eleven he sighed, sighed again, and was dead.

In his will, he wrote, "I hope my memory will always be dear to my wife, and that she will forgive me any pain I may have caused her."

All his life, he had hoped that he would be remembered kindly by humanity, which he had loved far beyond the wont of princes.

THE END

INDEX

Aberdeen, Lord (4th Earl), 142, 145
Albert, Prince Consort, 140, 144, 148, 172, 185, 247
Alexander, Czar, 150, 160, 212
Apponyi, Count, 163
Arese, 48, 97, 143, 162
Augusta, Queen (Consort of Kaiser William I), 244
Aumale, Duc d', 32

Baring Brothers, 57, 75, 81
Barrot, Odilon, 45, 84, 96, 99
Bates, Joshua, 57, 104
Baxter, Rev. Mr., 7, 174, 207
Bazaine, François Achille, 190, 194, 196, 231, 245
Beauharnais, Alexandre de, 16, 19, 54, 64, 185, 245
Beauregard, Comtesse de (Miss Elizabeth Howard), 79, 132
Béchevet, Comte de (Martin, son of Miss Howard), 132
Bellanger, Marguérite, 134, 199, 206
Benedetti, Vincent, 211, 221, 223
Béranger, Pierre de, 152
Berry, Duchesse de, 36
Berryer, Antoine Pierre, 65, 95, 111
Béville, Colonel de, 109, 126
Bismarck, Prince (Otto Eduard Leopold Bismarck), 147, 206, 212, 221, 225, 227, 238, 245
Blanc, Louis, 72, 82, 84, 88
Blessington, Lady, 53, 68
Bonaparte, Louis Napoleon, 16, 20, *et passim*
Bonaparte, Pierre, 219, 241
Bright, John, 173
Brunswick, Charles Duke of, 73, 78, 84, 95, 122
Burdett-Coutts, Baroness, 81
Bure (foster brother of Napoleon III), 70
Byng, Poodle, 59

Canrobert, François Certain, 116, 165, 229, 247
Castelnau, General, 195, 238, 243
Castiglione, Countess, 134
Cavaignac, Louis Eugène, 88, 91, 93, 104, 109, 113
Cavour, Camillo Benso, 143, 149, 159, 163, 170, 172, 180, 206
Changarnier, Nicholas, 85, 93, 97, 102, 106, 109, 116, 173, 242, 247
Charles, King of Rumania, 221
Charles X, 67, 243
Charlotte, Empress, 7, 195
Chateaubriand, François René, 36
Clarendon, Lord, (4th Earl), 142, 145, 150, 161
Clemenceau, M., 115
Cobden, Richard, 173
Coburgs, the, 192
Conneau, Dr., 49, 60, 65, 67, 75, 80, 159, 164, 222, 243, 252
Cornu, Mme., 69, 149, 164, 190
Cowley, Lord (1st Earl), 130, 142, 163, 173f, 186
Crispi, Franceso, 228
Cromwell, 36, 97, 101, 112

Demidoff Prince, 112
Disraeli, Benjamin, 53, 205
Disraeli, Mrs.,
Douay, Abel, 230, 238
Ducrot, Auguste, 234, 236, 238
Duvernois, Clement, 217, 224

Enghien, Duc d', 18, 42, 196
Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, Duke, 152
Espinasse, Colonel, 111, 116, 154
Eugénie, Empress, 9, 128, 131, 133, 146, 151, 157, 159, 164, 174, 176, 178, 182, 188, 194, 196, 200, 204, 207, 209, 215, 217, 222, 226, 229, 231, 235, 241, 244, 249
Evans, Dr. T. W., 126

Favre, Jules, 155f, 164, 242, 244
Ferdinand of Coburg, 221
Flahault, Comte de, 50, 64, 107, 111, 186
Fleury, Emile, 93, 95, 103, 108, 110, 113, 125, 127, 129, 168

Fould, Achille, 96, 99, 150, 201
Francis Joseph, Emperor, 150, 164, 167, 172, 192, 208f, 212, 227
Frederick William of Prussia, 122, 143

Gambetta, Léon, 220, 242
Garibaldi, Giuseppe, 177, 213
Girardin, Emile de, 40, 116
Godfrey, Miss, 34
Gomez, 153, 156
Gordon, Mrs. Eleanor, 41, 45, 123
Gramont, Duc de, 178, 200, 223, 227, 230
Grévy, President Jules, 88
Guizot, François, 57, 106

Hamilton, Duchess of, 131
"Hamilton, Mrs.," 28
Haussmann, Eugène, 138
Hertford, Marquis of, 126
Holland, King of (Louis, brother of Napoleon I), 16, 19, 64, 75, 78
Holland, Lord, 32
Home, Daniel Dunglas, 136
Hortense, Queen, 9, 16, 24, 26, 30, 32, 34, 38, 45, 50, 64, 123, 136
Howard, Miss, 79, 84, 88, 95, 120, 126, 131, 173
Hübner, Baron Alexander, 119, 131, 150, 159, 162
Hugo, Victor, 85, 112, 116

Imperial, Prince, 206, 212, 229, 233, 241 (and see under "Loulou")

Jerome, King, 20, 27, 47, 81, 111, 118, 125, 131, 241
Joinville, Prince de, 57, 85, 106, 192
Joseph, King, 20, 24, 39
Joseph Bonaparte, 33, 78, 128
Josephine (de Beauharnais, afterwards Empress), 16, 35, 140
Juarez, President Beneto, 188, 190, 194

Kinglake, A. W., 173
Kossuth, Lajos, 168

La Guéronnière, Louis, 162, 176
La Valette, 209
Laity, Lieut., 51, 81, 83, 85, 95, 101
Lamartine, Alphonse, 83, 86, 88, 93
Lamoricière, Louis Juchault, 104, 109, 116, 178, 180
Le Bas, Philippe, 19, 102, 199
Lebœuf, Edmond, 226, 232, 247
Lebrun, General, 227, 231, 236
Ledru-Rollin, A. A., 93, 98
Leo XIII, 182
Leopold, King of Belgium, 141, 150, 186, 192
Leopold of Hohenzollern, Prince, 221, 223f
Lesseps, Ferdinand de, 217
"Leu, Duchesse de St." (i.e. Hortense), 31, 34
Lhuys, Drouyn de, 122, 141, 143, 209
Lombard, Surgeon, 65
Louis, King of Holland, 16, 20, 26
Louis Philip, 23, 29, 34, 41, 45, 47, 56, 71, 75, 137, 204 (see Orleans)
Louis XVIII, 30
"Loulou" (Prince Imperial), 159, 174, 222
Lucien Bonaparte, 20, 37, 78, 81
Lyons, Lord, 222
Lytton, Bulwer, 55, 77

MacMahon, Marshal, 154, 166, 230, 232
Magnan, Marshal, 66, 108, 113, 122
Malmesbury, Lord (3rd Earl), 73, 76, 122, 146, 163
Martin, Comte de Béchevet, (son of Miss Howard), 132
Masuyer, Valérie, 9, 21, 25, 28, 30, 33, 41, 51
Mathilde, Princess, 38, 42, 47, 112, 129, 131, 226
Maupas, C. E. de, 108, 113
Maximilian, Archduke, 150, 185
Mazzini, Giuseppe, 153, 179
Melbourne, Lord, 55
Mels-Cohn, 247, 251
Mercy-Argenteau, Comtesse, 247
Mocquard, Jean, 108, 110, 126, 132
Modena, Duke of, 25, 149, 160, 167, 169, 172, 184, 202
Moltke, Count Von, 238
Montebello, Duc de, 51
Montholon, Comte de, 59, 65, 67, 77, 88, 93, 101
Montpensier, Duc de, 221
Monts, Count von, 244, 249
Morny, Duc de, 69, 96, 105, 107, 111, 113, 116, 119, 122, 128, 138, 140, 164, 183, 188, 192, 200, 204
Murat, Achille, 33, 48, 243

Napoleon I, 17, 29, 33, 68, 78, 136, 177, 243

INDEX

"Nap," Cousin, 81, 97, 112, 120, 125, 140, 146, 161, 164, 168, 177
Ney, Edgar, 98, 126
Nicholas of Russia, 117, 141, 147
Niel, Marshal, 167, 213

Ollivier, Olivier Emile, 154, 185, 201, 214, 218, 222, 231
Orleans, Duke of, 23, 129
Orsay, Comte d', 53, 79, 199
Orsini, Felice, 153, 164, 168, 178
Oudinot, General, 98, 111

Palikao, 231, 234, 242
Pallavicino, the Marquis, 80, 132
Palmerston, Lord, 53, 145, 161, 172
Parma, Duchess of (Comte de Chambord's sister), 160, 167
Parquin, Colonel, 21, 35, 43, 56, 59, 61, 65, 67
Peel, Robert (son of statesman), 69
Périer, Casimir, 31, 34
Persigny, Fialin de, 39, 41, 43, 46, 50, 52, 55, 58, 65, 81, 83, 87, 94, 96, 102, 108, 119, 126, 136, 140, 146, 162, 164, 179, 199, 203, 208
Pianori, 146, 153, 155, 157, 178
Pieri, 153, 156, 158
Pius IX, 176
"Plon-Plon" 177, 200, 232, 247, 249 (see "Nap")
Pope (Gregory XVI), 27, 149, 153, 160, 164, 169, 171, 175, 179, 182, 190, 202, 213
Portugal, ("the young Queen of"), 28; ("King-consort of"), 144
Prim, General, 187, 221

Radziwill, Prince, 224
Raglan, Lord, 145
Randon, Marshal, 209, 214, 228
Renan, Ernest, 175
Rochefort, Henri, 215
Rouher, Eugène, 96, 117, 204, 210, 213, 217, 232
Rowles, Miss Emily, 81, 173, 249
Russell, Lord John, 130

St. Arnaud, Marshal, 104, 108, 111, 113, 120, 122, 145, 215
Sand, George, 72
Saxony, Crown Prince of, 126
Soult, Marshal, 64
Stendhal, 129

Talleyrand, 34
Thélin (valet), 48, 68, 70, 76, 82, 110
Thiers, Adolphe, 58, 72, 85, 91, 95, 99, 101, 103, 109, 115, 154, 196, 200, 203, 205, 207, 214, 216, 218, 224, 226, 242, 249, 250
Trelawney, Clarence, 79, 132
Trochu, General, 232, 242, 246
Tuscany, Grand Duke of, 167, 172, 202
Vaudrey, Colonel, 41, 44, 50, 52, 95, 101
Victor Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, 143, 149, 161, 169, 172, 180 and afterwards King of Italy, 181, 218, 228, 230
Victoria, Queen, 81, 128, 144, 150, 161, 164, 171, 179, 182, 199f, 205, 182
Vieillard, 36, 69, 83, 89, 97, 121
Voirol, General, 42, 44

Walewska, Countess, 207, 247
Walewski, Comte, 33, 56, 122, 128, 142, 145, 149, 155, 162, 168, 172, 179, 185 (natural son of Napoleon I)
Westphalia, ex-King of, 125
William I, King of Prussia, 209, 212, 222, 228, 238

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120